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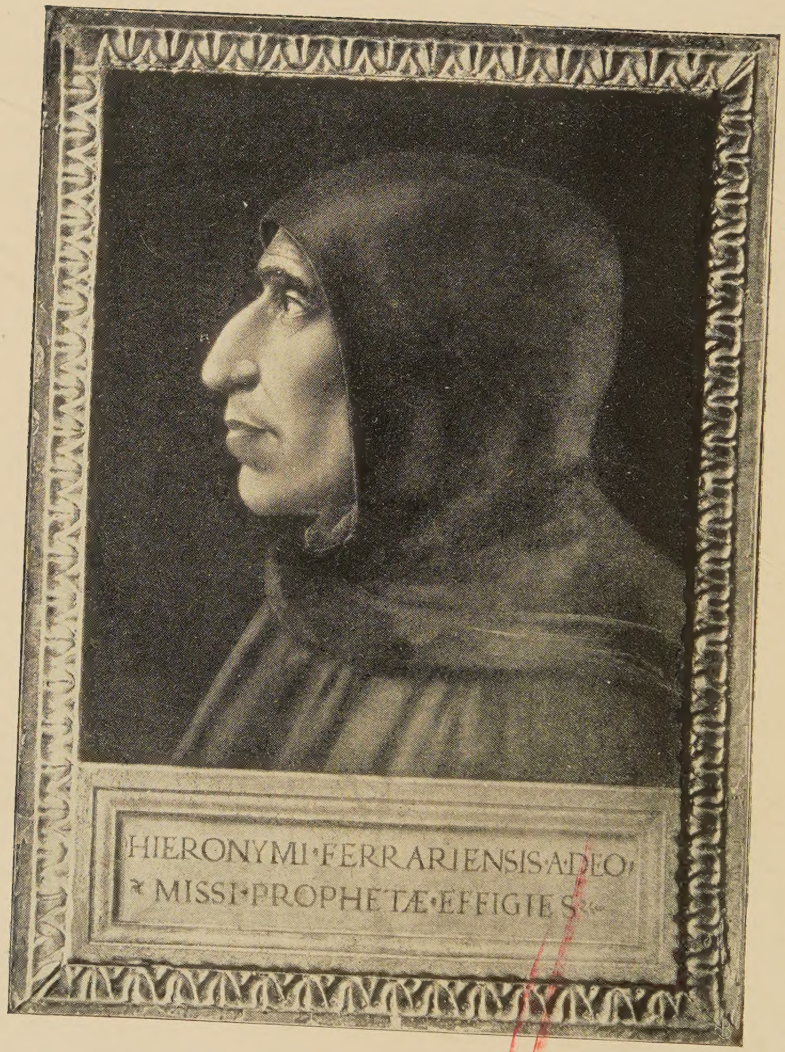

FRA GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

Frontispiece

THE RENAISSANCE

SAVONAROLA — CESARE BORGIA—JULIUS II.—LEO X. MICHAEL ANGELO :: BY ARTHUR, COUNT GOBINEAU

ENGLISH EDITION EDITED BY DR. OSCAR LEVY

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK
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THE LIFE WORK AND INFLUENCE OF COUNT ARTHUR DE GOBINEAU

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY DR. OSCAR LEVY

Motto: "*Every sensible man must be a conservative, in the right sense of the word.*"

B. Disraeli.
(*Sybil*, Book II., Cap. 15.)

I

It has been generally thought and stated that the past century was a profoundly irreverent and irreligious age, the age of the twilight of old gods, the shattering of old idols, the ruin of an old and holy creed. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. In every department of human knowledge, in philosophy, in science, and in politics as well as in art, the nineteenth century was deeply imbued with religious ideas; nay, spoilt by what may almost be called a spiritual intoxication. It was the only century known to history in which theology and its favourite offspring, morality, had swamped everybody and everything. Whether it paraded itself as cold and scientific, as warm and humanitarian, as lukewarm and agnostic, as progressive and liberal, as ethical and socialistic, as anarchical and revolutionary, as conservative and reactionary, as rationalistic and freethinking or as romantic and artistic, there was always one and the same personality behind that cloak of many colours, behind that medley of divers fashions; and that personality was a good man, a religious man—a Christian.

Thank heaven, this good man is growing wiser and a little wickeder. Thank heaven, that gloomy and oppressive century is past! Thank God, the spiritual deluge of the nineteenth century is fast dispersing! How that religious flood roared and rushed, how it deafened our ears, how it drowned the voice of our innermost heart, how it frightened every one of

us into submission! And now—unknown, of course, as yet to the great majority—the ebb of that movement has set in, and we are able to discern, with a calmer mind, the object of our terror. There it is: receding before our feet, crawling back into eternity, carrying its constituents away with it to the deep sea of oblivion—water, plenty of water, froth, plenty of froth, and sand, plenty of sand. And there are also a number of pebbles among the outgoing tide, and these pebbles are the great celebrities of the past century, the heroes who were acclaimed as superior and representative men, as leaders of mankind by their religious contemporaries, who proved once more their superabundance of faith by the selection of their celebrities. Good-bye, good pebbles; good-bye and away with you for ever into the watery limbo!

But what is that strange sight yonder? The sand and the water and the froth and the pebbles are disappearing fast before our eyes, but some firm rocks, which no one has ever yet seen, or even suspected, are left standing in lonely majesty between the receding waves. They seem to be firmly established, and like everything firm and self-centred, they are respected by the waves and the sands, which are flowing round them as if in awe and veneration, nay, which seem to flee from them as fast as they can as if frightened by a bad conscience. And well might they have a bad conscience, for while the flood was reigning, they had hidden from everybody's view these mighty rocks, pretending they were not there, they had danced merrily over them, roaring out of their myriad throats: they, the little pebbles, and the microscopic sands, and the babbling waves. But they could only hide for a time those mighty rocks, they could not move them—and now, when the ebb has set in, these rocks spring into everybody's sight, and grave and erect they stand above their surroundings, smiling grimly at the tiny pebbles and the loquacious waters at their feet. Away with you, ye ephemeral waters, away with you—and make room for the eternal rocks!

Take close heed of these rocks, you younger generation of the twentieth century! These rocks can no longer be ignored, as they were by your fathers and grandfathers: rocks that are ignored are dangerous! But if you pay due attention to them, they will be of welcome service to you; for these rocks, which your blind and superstitious ancestors did not notice, or did not wish to notice, are the only firm structure left to your youth, to the New Age, to the century which you one day will have to direct. Upon these rocks, upon this mighty foundation of granite, you shall henceforth build, you *must* build, for they alone, and not the pebbles and the sands that your forefathers thought eternal, will offer you a fitting and lasting foundation for the palace of the future.

One of those men, who, like those mighty rocks, is only now beginning to appear above the waters of the receding nineteenth century, is Count Arthur de Gobineau.

Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau, was born at Ville d'Avray, on the 14th of July, 1816. He was the descendant of a family that had remained loyal to the ancient dynasty of the Bourbons, and his father, Louis de Gobineau, an officer of the Royal Guard, had followed Louis XVIII. into exile during the hundred days of Napoleon's return. It was told of him that he considered Voltaire as the devil and Charles X. as a saint, but that he was enough of an independent thinker to love the Devil Monsieur de Voltaire, as well as the Saint Charles X.

The grandfather of our Count, who was a Councillor to the Parliament of Bordeaux, had a remarkable wife, who may have transmitted some of her qualities to her famous grandson. Her name was Victoire de la Haye, and she was a descendant of a Norman family of great wealth. A story is circulated about her that one day when she saw her son Thibault-Joseph fall from a horse upon the stone-pavement, she went up to him and coolly asked him, "Monsieur, did you do yourself any injury?" "No, mother." "Well then, get on again." Thibault-Joseph

never forgot the scene and always spoke with the greatest reverence of his mother and her unusual strength of character.

This uncle, Thibault-Joseph, who was destined to play a certain part in Arthur's life, was another noteworthy member of the family. When he was a pupil at the college of Guyenne, he was ignominiously sent away from that school, because one day he had tried to set fire to the school-house—which may certainly be considered as a proof that neither intelligence nor energy was wanting in this remarkable stock. Later on he fought under Dugommier in Spain and excelled in deeds worthy of those feudal knights from whom his famous nephew always imagined himself to descend. Almost single-handed he is said to have captured an English brig. He was a violent anti-Jacobin and legitimist, and after the ninth of Thermidor he did everything to re-establish the old order.

After a long journey in Germany with his mother, and having attended school at the College of Bienne, in Switzerland, Arthur Gobineau was sent to Paris to live with this marvellous uncle of his. The latter, however, in the course of time, had become more and more a quaint fellow: his whole occupation now apparently consisted in cursing the upstart Louis Philippe and in loose talking about the re-establishment of the legitimate kings of France. He spent his days on a sofa, his head hidden behind big newspapers, and without troubling in the least about his nephew, whom his valet was supposed to look after. Arthur Gobineau endured this life for three weeks and then went up to his uncle and frankly declared that he would commit suicide on the spot, and before his eyes, if the uncle did not change his behaviour towards him. Then, and only then, is the strange man reported to have given in and paid more attention to his nephew, whom he certainly must have recognised as belonging to his own breed.

On account of his Conservative political views, Gobineau, of course, never thought of playing a part under the new

democratic régime of France. All the time he was staying with his uncle, in the years 1835-1848, he occupied himself with literary work and thus acquired, during the most important years of his life, a knowledge which was all the more vast in that no spur to honour and bread forced him to specialise, and all the more useful and deep in that the love of study alone had caused him to acquire it. It is to this training, which Gobineau gave himself—the only training for a man worth having nowadays—that he owes his freedom from many of the popular or academic prejudices of his time and country.

While thus occupied with his studies in Paris, the young Count made the acquaintance of Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous author of *La Démocratie en Amérique*, who in 1848 became Minister of Foreign Affairs. Tocqueville appointed Gobineau his private secretary, and soon afterwards chief of his Cabinet. Thus Gobineau, who had never dreamt of taking active part in political affairs, saw himself launched upon a career which was—in its diplomatic variety—to become the career of his life.

De Tocqueville did not retain his post for long. On retiring, however, he recommended his young friend to his successors, with each of whom Gobineau remained popular. One of them, General Marquis d' Hautpoul, nominated him to be first secretary to the French Embassy at Berne.

This, no doubt, was an easy post and thus quite suitable to the literary propensities of Arthur Gobineau. It was here and later on at Hanover and Frankfort that he wrote from the notes collected during his Parisian studies his famous *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. This book, which he published in two volumes, one in 1853 and the other in 1855, gives us the key to Gobineau's personality and the quintessence of all his thought.

In Frankfort Gobineau made the acquaintance of Bismarck, but the Prussian politician, as was to be expected, took notice

neither of the young diplomatist nor of his extraordinary ideas. Bismarck apparently was so busy fighting the Austrian preponderance and pretensions to supremacy that he quite overlooked the man who was destined, more than himself, to give new blood and new beliefs to the future, just as he overlooked Schopenhauer, who, already famous, was then living at Frankfort. Thus in the long run the politician, even the politician of genius, is always beaten by the man of thought, the creator of ideas: empires vanish, but thought is immortal. Much more interest in Gobineau was taken by Bismarck's enemy and antagonist, Baron von Prokesch-Osten, who was not only a diplomatist but likewise an eminent writer on Oriental subjects. He was a very able disciple of Metternich and became well known later on as Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople. "Is the Gobineau who has written the book on the Inequality of the Human Races one of your relatives?" the old gentleman once asked the Count. "I have written it myself." "What—and so young?" was the astonished answer. Throughout his life Gobineau maintained cordial relations with the Baron, and kept up a most interesting correspondence with his admirer, who lived to a very great age.

In 1854 Gobineau was nominated first secretary to the Embassy in Teheran, and took with him his wife, whom he had married eight years previously, and his little daughter. He was delighted to go there, for, in spite of his Germanic propensities, the Orient, from his youth upwards, had always greatly attracted him. He went there with the firm resolution—so rarely found in a European diplomatist—to try to understand the Asiatics. He learned the language of the country, he sought the acquaintance of erudite Persians, he cultivated friendship with anyone who could be of use to his eager, searching mind. "I have tried to banish from my mind any idea of true or false superiority over the people that I have studied. Before delivering judgment on them and on their peculiarities, I have attempted to get into their habits of thought, I have tried to see things

from their point of view." Thus Gobineau wrote in his book "Three Years in Asia," which he published in 1856 on his return to France. But another and more important book was the fruit of his Persian sojourn, a book which had some success even during the author's lifetime. It is entitled "The Religions and Philosophies of Central Asia," and certainly ranks amongst the best that Gobineau has ever written. We shall hear more of it later on.

On his return to France, Gobineau was sent on a French man-of-war to Newfoundland in order to settle the eternal question of the fishing rights with the representatives of the British Government. He again profited from this journey, and brought back a book, "Voyage to Newfoundland." In a little book published later, under the title "Reminiscences of Travel," which contained three little stories, there is one that has its scene in Newfoundland. It is the story of a vain Parisian, a man about town, with whom a British Colonial girl falls in love, and who thus—quite contrary to his expectation—sees himself taken seriously by the simple Anglo-Saxon temperament, and threatened with that Waterloo of all philanderers and poets, to wit, matrimony. This story could only be written by a good European, that is to say by a man who, like Gobineau, understood the weaknesses of his own as well as the virtues and shortcomings of other peoples. He was entirely above the two nations and was thus enabled to describe them with all that bonhomie and true satire which is and always must be the outcome of a certain good-natured contempt for its object.

In the year 1861 Gobineau was sent again to Teheran, this time as chief of the French Embassy, and here he passed two years in succession. During this time he tried to make use of his great personal influence in Persian circles to gain a footing for France in that country, where Russia and England were not yet so firmly established as they are to-day. But in Paris his ideas were considered those of a dreamer: in this world the rare man of healthy imagination is usually ranked

among the idealists, while the real idealists always appeal strongly to the men in power, who usually are Philistines and stand in sore need of a little romanticism as a welcome antidote to their prosaic souls. The French *bureaux*, the seat of power in modern France, had always distrusted the Count, whom they could not forgive, because, besides an anti-democrat, he was also a "scribbler," a fact which, combined with the want of success even in this inferior direction, was a sure sign of a wild personality. Long ago a friendly Minister of Foreign Affairs had said to Gobineau, alluding to his essay: "A scientific book of such importance will do your diplomatic career no good; on the contrary it may do you a great deal of harm!"

Gobineau soon discovered that this Minister was right, and that neither his books nor his political ideas had influenced the central authorities in his favour. When, in 1864, he applied for an appointment in Constantinople, his request was not granted. He was sent to Athens instead, where he published the two books mentioned above, his "Reminiscences of Travel" and "The Religions and Philosophies of Central Asia." He wrote and published some other books besides during his stay at Athens: "The History of the Persians," the "Asiatic Novels," and a number of poems, which received the title of "Aphroëssa."

In the year 1868 the count was transferred from Athens to Rio de Janeiro, where he suffered a great deal from uncongenial surroundings. It may be easily imagined that an aristocratic nature, a firm believer in good blood, could not but be shocked and horrified by the aspect of that mixed population (all the more repugnant because it is a prosperous mixed population) which the two Americas, those of the north and south, offer to a cultured European. His only consolation was the friendship with the Emperor Dom Pedro, who seems to have suffered from his exile as much as Gobineau, and who probably complained to the French Count often

enough in the orthodox Ovidian strain about his Brazilian isolation:

"Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli."
(Here I am a barbarian, because there is nobody who understands me.)

The Emperor seems to have had an intimate knowledge of Count Gobineau's books, and every Sunday the two, the Monarch and the French Ambassador, met for long conversations. Even after Gobineau—for reasons of health—had left Brazil, this friendship was maintained by means of a long correspondence, a correspondence which was only interrupted by the prolonged stay of the Emperor in Europe during the years 1871, 1876 and 1877.

The war of 1870 found Count Gobineau in France. He had inherited a fortune from his uncle Thibault-Joseph, and had with part of the money bought the castle of Trye-en-Vexin, which he considered as the cradle of the Norman House of Gournay, the house from which his mother was descended. As the Mayor of Trye he was able to do a great deal for his fellow-citizens during the war. He spoke German fluently, he had a good knowledge of the German character, and was able by means of successful parleys with the victorious generals to shield his district from a great deal of severe treatment. Unlike Taine and Renan and so many other Frenchmen, he had foreseen the defeat of his country: he likewise thought that France, on account of her rampant democracy, had thoroughly deserved that defeat. But his aversion to democratic France did not prohibit him from doing what he could for her in the hour of danger, and thus this despiser of patriots and democrats was of more use to his fatherland than many of its enthusiastic and well-meaning, but less intelligent worshippers. When the war was over the town of Beauvais publicly acknowledged its gratitude to the Count. His grateful fellow-citizens even wished to send him to Parliament or to the Senate, an honour which Gobineau, as *gentilhomme* and *honnête homme* and disbeliever in the divine right of the

people and its votes, had to decline with polite though determined thanks.

In 1872 Gobineau was sent to Stockholm. There, as elsewhere, he does not seem to have found many congenial friends amongst his colleagues and apparently led a very solitary life. And these colleagues themselves do not seem to have had at any time much knowledge of the Count's ideas and doings. One day, for instance, Gobineau in a certain drawing-room met another diplomatist, a former acquaintance of his German days. This colleague was asked by the lady of the house whether he knew the Count. "Oh, yes," was the reply, "the worthy Gobineau, of course, I know him." "You see," whispered Gobineau (who was, of course, highly amused at being called "worthy" while propagating so many daring ideas), "you see, madam, how well-known I am," and in his simple and good-natured manner he heartily shook hands with the great connoisseur of human character. It must be added, however, that Gobineau himself was apparently not desirous of leading people on to the right track about himself and his literary achievements. He was not a man of letters, but a gentleman of letters, and as such was not given to talking overmuch of his printed offspring. He also, no doubt, knew what kind of literary people a democratic age brings to pre-eminence, and in order not to be mistaken for one of the geniuses of the day he may not have cared to acknowledge his authorship in public. He never looked a genius either: like young Professor Nietzsche, he had something military in his bearing as well as in his manner, so that a flunkey in the Tuileries, whom he had asked a question one day, replied to him, "Oui, mon général!"

In 1876 Gobineau received leave of absence from his government, which enabled him to accompany the Emperor of Brazil on a journey to Russia, Turkey, and Greece. They returned by way of Rome, where Gobineau for the first time met Richard Wagner, who, as the Count's discoverer, was destined to play a certain part in his life. It was, however,

not a case of appreciation "at first sight"; it was not until a year later, when Wagner had read Gobineau's book on the Renaissance, that he knew, or thought he knew, who the French Count really was. But from this time a rather close friendship sprang up between the composer and the ambassador, a friendship which led to a great deal of personal intercourse and was destined to last till the end of Gobineau's life.

This end, however, was hastened by the ill-use to which Gobineau was subjected on the part of his old enemies the governmental *bureaux* in Paris. They apparently knew what an enemy of their order and class they had to deal with, and pensioned the independent Count off before his time. As if wishing to poison the wound they thus inflicted, they nominated as his successor the Marquis de Tamissier, whose real name was Carrier. This Carrier was a grandson of the notorious Carrier who, when sent as commissioner by the Convention to Nantes, had thousands of people executed, some by the rapid method of drowning in the Loire. "The grandson of the Carrier of the *Noyades de Nantes*," wrote Gobineau to a friend, "the Carrier of the 'Republican Marriages' (the drowning of a man and woman bound together was called by the popular wit a 'Republican Marriage') it is he who is going to be my successor." Thus ran the complaint of our anti-Jacobin ambassador, whose manly heart must have been sore at the double affront offered him. Soon afterwards his health broke down, his eyes began to trouble him, and he likewise suffered some heavy monetary losses. He went to Rome, where he led a very simple life, occupying himself with sculpture, which since his residence in Athens had been a constant source of pleasure to him. From time to time he went to Bayreuth, where he enchanted the Germans by his tales of many lands—but it must not be forgotten that he was an old and broken man, and that only thus can the friendship between such a fantastic thinker as

Wagner and such a profound mind as Gobineau be satisfactorily explained.

During the winter of 1881-1882 his health deteriorated more and more. In the spring he went to Bayreuth, but could not stop more than two days. He then went to Gastein, where he slightly improved. During the summer he visited his friends the Count and Countess de la Tour in their *château* in the Auvergne. When the autumn came he wished to return to Italy and left his hosts on October 11th to go to Pisa. In Turin, on the 13th, while trying to get into the railway carriage, he had a sudden seizure and had to be carried back to the hotel. A priest was called who administered the last consolation of the Church, but stated later on that the Count was already unconscious and unable to appreciate the benefit conferred upon him. The power of the great freethinker's mind was such that it could even give way at the right moment!

II

WHEN Gobineau was an old man, his Essay on the Inequality of Human Races went into a second edition, to which he prefixed a new introduction. In this he declares: "I leave these pages just as I wrote them many years ago, when the doctrine they contain sprang out of my mind just like a bird that puts its head out of its nest and then seeks its way in illimitable space." This poetical sentence alone gives the reader a hint of the great value of the book, a value which at first sight might not seem so obvious. For there is no doubt that the Essay is not free from faults. It is very long, it is rather chaotic, and it is dry reading in places. It suffers from great prejudices and from some omissions. Neither its facts, nor its theories, nor its judgments are wholly admirable or even true. But what is wholly admirable is the spirit in which the book is written.

It is one of the few books that had to be written—the author's heart, one feels, would have burst in the fulness of its ecstasy, if it had not found an outlet on paper. The book is full of inward fire, of fire only half hidden and breaking out again and again from underneath the grey ashes of scientific, archæological, historic, linguistic and other facts. It is a rebellious book, but the rebel in this case is a creative rebel, a rebel from above, a rebel against the rebels of his time, and, let me add, of our own time. He is an aristocratic rebel, who has deduced and proves from history a terrible truth which he throws like a bomb into the faces of the victorious heretics, reformers, radicals, socialists, and other Philistines and Pharisees of revolution. This truth discovered by Gobineau is the all-importance of race. This truth is the neglect of the principle of race under democratic conditions. This truth is the refutation of the democratic idea that by means of an improvement in environment a healthy and noble people could be produced out of a rotten stock.

Gobineau's "system," as explained in the Essay, is the following: "The history of mankind proves that the destinies of people are governed by a racial law. Neither irreligion, nor immorality, nor luxurious living, nor weakness of government is causing the decadence of civilisations. If a nation goes down, the reason is that its blood, the race itself, is deteriorating. Now, there has been only one race that was able to create a civilisation, because it alone possessed the element of order and a certain healthy imagination, and that was the white race—the Aryans. If there had only been Aryans on earth, humanity would have been easily and for ever perfectible. But there were inferior races as well, the yellow and the black races, which always and everywhere adulterated the pure white blood. These mixtures, no doubt, have benefited the yellows and the blacks, and thus even these mixtures have created something in this world. But the Aryan blood, again and again rejuvenating inferior peoples, has finally exhausted itself. There is consequently nothing

left in this world of ours but half-castes, that is to say, cowardly and impotent people, ready to adapt themselves to any law and any master, and not minding the loss of their personality, because they do not happen to possess one."

History, philology, archæology, anthropology, are called in by the author to support his thesis, or rather his cry of alarm. For the poet again and again peeps out from behind his pedantic, dry, and scientific mask, and this long epic, which might fitly be called "The Twilight of the Aryan," rings out in a noble and passionate complaint, worthy of a great author and laying bare the bleeding heart of a Jewish prophet:

"Not death, but the certainty of dying in degradation, is the gloomy prospect in store for us; and perhaps this disgrace that is doomed to fall upon our posterity might leave us cold, did we not feel, with a hidden thrill of terror, that the clawing hands of destiny are already upon our shoulders."

If we wish to gauge the importance and novelty of this idea, we must go back to the nineteenth century and remember the two main currents of thought regarding men, currents which we shall understand all the better as they are still flowing, though with diminished strength, through the thought of our own day. One of these is the spiritualistic current of Christianity, the Christianity that wishes to save every soul because it thinks everyone perfectible and possibly, if converted to the eternal truth, equal to everybody else. In opposition to this trend of thought stands the materialistic school of the natural scientist, a school based upon the ideas of Montesquieu, Herder, and Hegel, or in this country, of Buckle and John Stuart Mill, according to which a human being is an unstable entity dependent upon outside circumstances and changing with them—a creature, in short, of chance and environment. In opposition to both these schools, the spiritualistic and the materialistic, Count Gobineau had the courage to declare, in the midst of his dark age, that the environment scarcely mattered, that the "eternal truth" was an impotent assumption, and that everything, perfectibility as well

as history, depended upon the blood, upon the race. His conclusions were the same as Disraeli's, who probably had never heard of him: "All is race, there is no other truth."

From this little glimpse at the Essay alone we may perceive that we have to do with an author of the aristocratic school, that is to say, of a school that heartily despises the values of modern morality. Gobineau, it will be seen, belongs to the same school as Nietzsche, and thus he not only despises our current opinions on "good and evil," but he fears and loathes them on account of their deleterious effect upon humanity. For Gobineau as well as Nietzsche had noticed fifty years ago what the most cultured people of to-day are only beginning to suspect, that our moral values, the values of Democracy, Socialism, Liberalism, Christianity, lead to the survival of a type of man who has no right to survive, or who ought only to survive on an inferior plane. Gobineau as well as Nietzsche knew that "good" under the present values and in our time only means "tame, adaptable, conventional," at best "industrious, persevering, efficient and business-like." Both could never forget, and again and again they emphasize the fact, that goodness in non-vulgar times meant something quite different from to-day, that goodness once upon a time signified "energy, bravery, daring, strength of character, power of endurance, power of attacking, power of overcoming," that it did *not* mean "harmlessness, absence of faults and vices, negative virtue, female virtue, commercial sharpness and cleverness, mediocrity."

True, Gobineau did not, like Nietzsche, hold Christianity openly responsible for this transvaluation of noble values into coward's values, but he nevertheless agrees with him as to the source of this evil by pointing with great emphasis to the influence of the later Semitic race. To the earlier Semite, the warrior-Semite, the Semite under his kings, he seems to have given full approval. This *Sémite-blanc primitif*, as he is called in the Essay is, according to the author, even a near relation to his hero, the Aryan, and his actions, as those

of unbroken conqueror tribes, found in Gobineau a natural and willing admirer. Unfortunately these early white Semites mixed their blood with lower races and thus degenerated. Through this mixture, the race of Shem fell for ever from the high position it held in the ancient world; nay, it even became *le fond corrupteur* of this ancient world, and by its intermarriage with the pure and noble Aryan blood it ruined the race of Rome. Here it will be seen, we come across one of those deductions of Gobineau's which he—to satisfy his theory that every degeneration arises from the crossing of races—had to make, but which is nevertheless only a partial truth. For how, we may ask, could these insignificant Semitic tribes spoil the noble blood of a whole mighty empire, even supposing that some of them did intermarry with the Romans, which the Jews, as far as we know, never did to a great extent? And what, it might be asked, led the proud Romans to intermarry with such inferior beings?

This is, no doubt, a weak point in Gobineau's system: he overrates the physical effects of a race and neglects its spiritual influence; he overlooks the influence of ideas and values. Surely a race may influence the world directly by its blood; but yet more frequent and much more powerful is the indirect influence, the influence of ideas, and this is the influence which the Jews have exercised. It was by means of their ideas, not by means of their blood, that the Semitic race broke the Roman Empire. It was Christianity, that popular accentuation of Judaism, which among the slaves, women, and weaklings of Rome found such a ready acceptance, that slowly but surely undermined that unique and flourishing empire. It was Christianity that made the slaves equal to their masters, that, helped by decadent Pagan philosophy, poisoned the good conscience and healthy instincts of these masters, and finally led them to intermarry with slaves and barbarians. It was intermarriage with the non-race, with the people, that led to the ruin of Rome: it was the mixture of different classes much more than the

mixtures of different races that produced that decadent and servile chaos of the later Roman Empire.

But apart from these minor shortcomings there are startling flashes of wisdom in the Essay, flashes which attest the unprejudiced and pagan attitude of Gobineau's mind, and further prove that Gobineau was a Nietzschean before Nietzsche. Gobineau sees the connection between later Semitism and Democracy, he sees that Democracy is the enemy of all government and all society: "All civilisations that assume democratic forms are speedily ruined," he says. In the question of slavery, he is likewise in agreement with Nietzsche: "Slavery," says our author, "like all human institutions, rests not only upon constraint but upon other conditions as well. . . . There is no doubt that slavery sometimes has a legitimate basis, and we are almost justified in laying down that in this case it results quite as much from the consent of the slave as from the moral and physical predominance of the master."

But the real genius of Gobineau, the clear thought, flashes out—just as that of Schopenhauer in his "Parerga and Paralipomena"—when he forgets his system and speaks of what he has seen and felt.

Gobineau's "Philosophy of History," as we have seen, is to some extent forced and questionable, and even in its truer and indisputable parts it has been more lucidly developed by Friedrich Nietzsche; but when the theory of the Essay leaves Gobineau he becomes a true pioneer of thought. I am referring here to a science—or rather an art, which, after the collapse of wiredrawn metaphysics and idealist tomfooleries, will play the principal part in any further philosophy: the art of psychology, that is to say, the insight into the character of human beings and the subsequent valuation of this character.

It is in this that Gobineau, as a poet, excels. His psychology of the yellow race (Book III., cap. 4 and 5) is a masterpiece. His description of the purest and the noblest Aryan organisation, that of the Brahmins, is of the greatest value even to-day

and of special interest to Englishmen; and while perusing these eloquent chapters (Book III., cap. 1 and 2) we must not forget that it was penned fifty years before Meredith Townsend, in his "Asia and Europe," came to the same conclusions. All through the book we meet with observations on the habits and thoughts of mankind which charm us by their truth and insight.

The Essay, as was to be expected, met with little success. Who in this specialised world could take an interest in a work that was based upon so many different sciences? Already the diplomatists, as we had seen, had ignored Gobineau's ideas by placing him amongst the *littérateurs* and professional Utopians, while the professional Utopians were not tempted to interest themselves in a man who had based his theories upon such an astounding series of facts. And those occupied with facts, the professional scientists, were then, as now, divided into a great number of clans, each busying itself with a certain set of facts, and, if honest, not over-much inclined to speak in public about a book which was beyond their comprehension. The specialisation of our age, though of course better than an all-embracing dilettantism, is a danger to all truly comprehensive, philosophical works, which, even when noticed by men of science, are heartily recommended only to the colleagues of another speciality.

The archæologist says that the book in question belongs to the department of anthropology, the anthropologist hands it over to the philologist, the philologist shifts the duty on to the Orientalist, the Orientalist to the theologian, the theologian recommends it to the earnest attention of the historian, while the historian completes the vicious circle by handing it back to the archæologist. These conscientious men of science behave like a policeman whom, during my student days, I met one night in an obscure quarter of Berlin and with whom I struck up a friendship. I asked him why he did not arrest a certain drunkard who made such a terrible noise and would surely do harm to himself or others? "I never

arrest a drunkard," he answered, "it means so much bother over a little thing: if the worst comes to the worst, all I do is to chase the fellow into another policeman's beat, and there the other policeman, you see, has the pleasure of running him in and giving evidence against him, and so on."

In our times, however, when a book is ignored or insufficiently spoken about in public, it is often taken seriously by a select circle; nay, it may even stir up, amongst a few, violent applause or condemnation. And that is what happened, at least with one man, in the case of Gobineau's Essay. It was his mighty friend and patron, Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous author of *La Démocratie en Amérique*, who was touched on the raw by what he called Gobineau's dangerous and pernicious doctrines.

The epistolary interchange between Tocqueville and Gobineau is all the more interesting as Tocqueville's answers are the typical objections of his and of our own age. Tocqueville was a typical Liberal representative of the nineteenth century—that is to say, a man whose opinions (whether he knows it or not) are based upon Christian prejudices. For Liberalism is a latent religion, Liberalism is crypto-Christianity, every Liberal is a Nazarene priest in mufti. No doubt, Tocqueville was a very enlightened crypto-Christian, who could not or would not absolutely close his eyes to the danger of democracy and other unpalatable facts, but, being a Christian, his judgments on the one hand are very pessimistic as regards human nature and his proposals and remedies on the other are coloured by a puerile optimism. The misgivings and doubts which Tocqueville has concerning democracy are many and grave, his fatalism and pessimism are as severe as or severer than Gobineau's; but he saves himself from Gobineau's conclusion by that peculiar and tenacious hopefulness, which is the outcome of the cowardice so characteristic of the Christian thinker. Desperately he clings to the most unsubstantiated assertions, all the more desperately as they are his "last straw," and he knows that giving up for a moment means

the break-down of his whole system. Which of us has not met some philosophic Liberal, who, like Tocqueville, has the greatest contempt for his contemporaries, who takes a gloomy view about their future, who deplores their want of manliness, character, daring and independence, but who will never draw the right and straightforward conclusions from these facts? He will point out that the environment ought to be improved, or that education has been lacking, or that only the upper classes are spoilt and the people are "quite sound"; he will patiently wait for "evolution" or "progress" to better things, or for co-operative and socialistic reforms, nay, he will appeal to religion and a revival of morality and idealism—he will do anything, in short, rather than utter an honest yea or nay, rather than come to Gobineau's conclusion that no apple tree, by careful nursing, will produce grapes, that no education can get out of a man any qualities which are not in him, that base blood cannot be turned into noble blood by any "free" patent medicine, and that the present race of Europeans has, with very few exceptions, to be found in all nations and classes alike, become a countless horde of helots who are in many instances even useless helots. It is the shallow Christian Liberalism of the past century that comes out in these letters of Tocqueville to Gobineau, a Christian Liberalism which is, to be sure, carefully wrapped up in high-sounding principles and made palatable by the well-known exuberant phraseology of that numerous sect.

Having received the book on October 11th, 1853, M. de Tocqueville at once confesses that he has a great distrust of its principles and ideas because "it takes for granted," he says, "the fatality of constitution, and this fatality is applied not only to individuals but likewise to that collection of individuals called a race."

On November 17th, 1853, he repeats: "Your doctrine is a sort of fatalism, or, if you like, of predestination—which, of course, is different from the fatalism of St. Augustine, the Jansenists, and the Calvinists, inasmuch as yours is based more

upon the deterioration of matter, or what you call race. This predestination seems to me very nearly related to pure materialism. It likewise tends to a great restriction of human liberty. And this, of course, is very bad," our author continues, "for how can anyone tell people who already live like slaves and barbarians, who are already prone to any sort of weakness and cowardice, that there is no hope for them, no possibility of perfection, of changing their habits and of improving their government?" "Don't you see," he concludes, "that from your doctrine naturally arise all the evils of inequality, pride, violence, tyranny, contempt of one's neighbour, and slavery in every form?"

All these arguments are highly typical of the Liberal. It is very significant that he at the outset tries to brand with the name of "materialist" a man who troubles about science, about race, about eugenics, about the body—for to the Christian (and our Liberal is a Christian) it is the soul alone that matters, at least so long as he is a real Liberal, and has not forgotten or adulterated his own principles. Tocqueville's complaint about Gobineau's restriction of human liberty and his reproach about a pure fatalism in Gobineau's views, is likewise entirely Christian, for the Christian is forced by his religion to believe in free will, and in the consequent perfectibility of every human soul, which, if perfected in the orthodox manner, becomes as good as anybody else's soul. In this belief, in this expectation, Tocqueville is a glorious optimist, an optimist, be it understood, for the future, for the kingdom to come, for the Messianic Empire, as promised by his priests, prophets and other prestidigitators. But when he begins to judge present conditions, and more still when he begins to act, his poisoned pessimistic and nihilistic nature and his entire disbelief in everything and everybody around him comes out most shamelessly. For the Christian, it must not be forgotten, has the "evil eye" for "the world," and is thus obliged to see evil in even the most healthy manifestations of human nature, which his anti-natural and anti-human morality forces him to

condemn. What Tocqueville thinks of his contemporaries is really much worse than what Gobineau thinks, for Gobineau only complains of their weakness, adaptability, impotence, while Tocqueville despairs of their very nature, and like a true Christian all the more so, the more potent that nature is. Thus Gobineau despises but loves at the same time, while Tocqueville fears and loathes. But in spite of his loathing of mankind around him, Tocqueville, as a real Liberal, carefully avoids drawing any realistic conclusions from his observations. On the contrary, he who fears the people, wishes to do something for the people, he who despairs of their very nature, wishes them to live on in faith, love and hope for something better, which might possibly "turn up" (change of government, customs, etc., etc.) without being able to give a shadow of a practical proof why this should be better for them, how it should be brought about, and who should bring it about. Between the Scylla of a senseless optimism and the Charybdis of an unjust pessimism he sails along, and if this Liberal Christian did not come to grief long ago through his want of balance and principle, it was not his merit, it was the absence of any efficient counter-current which kept his unstable barque afloat during the last century. *Quousque tandem?*

In a letter, dated July 30th, 1856, Tocqueville comes back to the charge that Gobineau's ideas are extremely pernicious and immoral. He likewise throws out the hint, and rightly, I think, that the system is hostile to the doctrine of his Church, and that no one, not even that "cynic" Mérimée, would dare to proclaim such views openly in modern France. This reproach is repeated in a more outspoken way in a letter of January 14th, 1857. Here Tocqueville writes: "The very essence of Christianity is the endeavour to make out of humanity a single family whose members should be equally capable of perfecting themselves and of becoming more and more similar to each other. How can this essence of Christianity be reconciled with a doctrine of history which postulates different and unequal races, whose powers of

judgment and action are more or less limited, and whose original dispositions are something fixed, and thus hinders some of these races from attaining any sort of perfection? Christianity, certainly has tried to make out of all human beings brethren, and equal brethren. Your doctrine, however, considers them at the very best like cousins, whose father is in heaven. . . . For you there are no other people in this world but the conquerors and the vanquished, masters and slaves, and that by the very right of birth. . . . I therefore wish to point out to you again that the perusal of your book has made me very doubtful about your faith, your religiosity."

It is astonishing—but in a way easily explained—that Gobineau denies with indignation the charge of not being a good Catholic. In one of his answers, which gives us a hint as to the origin and cause of the Essay, he tells Tocqueville that he has seen the revolution with his own eyes. On this occasion all the dirty blouses have produced such a disgust in him, have accentuated his ideas of justice and truth to such an extent that, if he had not been married, he would have been capable of becoming a monk, only in order to be as antagonistic to the spirit of revolution as possible. . . . "Don't doubt my religion," he pleads most earnestly with Tocqueville. "If I say I am a Catholic, it is the truth. Of course I am not a perfect Catholic, which I regret, though some day I hope to be one, but at least I am a sincere Catholic, Catholic in heart and soul, and if I believed for a moment like you that my historical ideas were in opposition to the Catholic religion, I should give them up immediately."

Such were Gobineau's opinions on his religion in early life, opinions which no doubt became somewhat modified later on. But on the whole he really seems to have had, like several other Catholic free spirits, no idea or consciousness of his own want of orthodoxy. All his attention was concentrated upon the victorious heretics, upon our modern revolutionaries, and by fighting them to the utmost of his power it absolutely

escaped him that he had abandoned his Church, a Church which, in spite of its pagan varnishing cannot deny certain moral principles and ideas—the equality of man, original sin, free will and others, upon which the whole of Christianity is founded. By fighting the heretics Gobineau had become a heretic himself, but a heretic after the fashion of the Renaissance, a heretic as many brilliant Popes had been before him, that is to say, a heretic from above. He had left his Church unconsciously, but rightly, for it must be stated here that no one who wishes honestly to fight the spirit of revolution can remain, or should remain within even the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is indeed the most pagan of the Christian Churches; it is the most anti-Christian Church in existence; it is a Church that to a certain extent counteracts the baleful doctrines of true Christianity, for it is an aristocratic Church—but it is still a Church; it would cease to be a Church if it were to give up Christianity altogether: a non-Christian Church, like a plum cake without plums, would be an absurdity. Catholicism will always keep up Christianity, and with Christianity the spirit of revolution. Thus no true enemy of the revolution can remain even within the Catholic fold any more than Gobineau could. But the mere fact that Gobineau—at first, anyhow—still imagined himself to be a faithful son of his Church, will prove how naturally the spirit of an enlightened paganism arises in our midst, how inevitable is this grand aristocratic reaction against modern democracy, how healthy the whole movement is and how powerful it will one day become. It is a movement which has filled some minds with almost religious fervour, a very necessary fervour, by the bye, for democracy is itself the outcome of a religion and can only be fought by another religion. And it is a European movement, to be sure, just like its enemy, democracy; for Gobineau was by no means the only unconscious pagan of his age. In England we have had the similar and still more instructive case of Benjamin Disraeli. This great man, for whom Christianity was only

another form of Judaism, likewise considered himself all his life as a true son of Semitism, as a pillar of his holy and ancestral creed, as a stalwart *defensor fidei* against the infidels—and all his life he had not the slightest suspicion that by fighting English Liberalism, Puritanism, Nonconformity, he was not fighting, as he thought, infidelity, *but faith*, that he was really fighting his own religion, or rather, the logical outcome of his religion.

Tocqueville's letter of January 24th, 1857, is the fitting coping-stone to this memorable correspondence. "Ever since I have known you," Tocqueville writes in an apparent fit of indignation, "I have found your temperament *essentiellement frondeur*. . . . What end can be served by these political discussions between us? We belong to two different camps, camps that absolutely exclude each other. You consider the human race as consisting of big children; and, besides, these children are, according to you, degenerate and badly educated children. . . . I am, like you, of the opinion that our present humanity is very badly educated, which fact is the principal cause of its miseries and weaknesses, but I sincerely hold that a better education could remedy the evil. At any rate, I do not consider myself as justified in renouncing this task of education for ever. I believe that one can still lead the human race towards better things, and this by an appeal to its natural honesty and good sense. In short, I wish to treat men as grown-up beings—perhaps I am wrong in this. . . . You, sir, on the other hand, profoundly despise our human kind; at least our special part of mankind; you consider our people not only in a state of momentous distress and submission, but incapable of ever again rising to the surface. Their very constitution, you think, condemns them to slavery. . . . I do not allow myself such liberty of thought about my people and country, and I think that no one has any right to come to such desperate views concerning them. In my eyes, individuals and societies only become something through liberty. That liberty is more difficult to establish and to keep

up in democratic societies like ours than in certain aristocratic societies that have preceded us, I have always admitted. But that the establishment of democratic liberty is impossible, I shall never be courageous enough even to think. That any attempt in this direction must fail, and that there is absolutely no hope for its establishment—that is a thought with which I would ask God never to inspire me. No, no, I do not believe, and I do not wish to believe, that this human species which is at the head of the visible universe, has become that horde of bastards which you think it, a horde which consequently should be handed over without future hope of help to a small number of herdsmen or keepers, who after all are not better than we are and sometimes may be even worse. With your kind permission I beg to say that I have less confidence in you than in the goodness and justice of our Father in Heaven."

This letter breathes, if not wisdom, at least honesty. Gobineau's principle of race, as Tocqueville rightly sees, can never be "discussed" or "explained" or "taught," like that Socratic virtue, which proved its democratic origin by the very fact that it could be taught. Gobineau's "Virtue," his principle of race, cannot be transmitted in this easy Socratic way: it must be felt, and where it is not felt, explanations and discussions are useless. But in spite of Tocqueville and Christianity, it is felt and will be felt more and more, and one day the decision between the two different creeds, that of Tocqueville and that of Gobineau, will have to be made—a decision, not of Parliament, but of the battlefield: for the sons of the Europeans of to-day—unlike their fathers, who fought for markets—will again fight for ideas.

III

GOBINEAU did not listen to de Tocqueville. No man who wants to do anything in this world can or should listen to his friends. Like the treasure-seeker in the German fairy tale he must pursue his lonely way, regardless of all the warnings, mysterious voices, friendly admonitions, frightening prophecies, tempting offers, and fond entreaties that force themselves on his attention and seek to lead him astray. If he gives in for a moment, if he listens, if he turns to the right or the left—so the tale runs—he loses his treasure, his truth. Gobineau did not listen, and so he found the way to his truth.

But even the bravest have their hours of weakness and despair, and if the brave soldier lives to a certain age and has experienced all the meanness and vicissitudes of a hostile world, he too, begins to yearn for less solitude and more gratitude and may be tempted to make—what other and less heroic people do all their life long—a slight compromise. It was in his old age, when he was tired and worn out, that Gobineau made a compromise which, I think, in the interest of his work, he was perfectly justified in making. He had become a friend of Richard Wagner and allowed himself to be "discovered" by this man, who had not the slightest inkling of what Gobineau was driving at.

It was a real abyss that separated Gobineau from Wagner. First of all Wagner had been a revolutionary, and Gobineau, the *gentilhomme*, the *honnête homme* of the ancient régime abhorred all kinds of revolutions and revolutionaries. He knew what to expect from revolutions; he knew what kind of people a revolution brings to the top; he knew that a revolution only causes a reaction, and that between reaction and revolution the highest interests of life suffer, and not only suffer, but are often crushed. What had such a man to do with Wagner? True, Wagner was now an old man and had turned

into a romanticist and a Christian. But such characteristics could likewise never please a man like Gobineau, who knew (or ought to have known) that an old revolutionary invariably becomes either reactionary or a Christian, and who likewise knew that revolution, romanticism and Christianity are only the three progressive stages of the same decadent ailment. Had not he seen it often enough? First, the revolutionary makes the world uglier and sicker than it ever was before, then the romanticist offers the "hashish" of his art to alleviate the torments of the sick, and when the patient's senses and intelligence are dulled and numbed the Christian steps in and offers his panacea of redemption to the "sinner," whose only sin is his stupidity. Wagner had been through all the three stages himself; he had been a revolutionary, a romanticist and a Christian, he thus knew the needs of his time by his own experience, and had some justification for posing as the principal adviser and physician, or rather quack doctor, to his age. What had Gobineau in common with this typical representative of a decadent and neurotic epoch?

"I call 'romantic' the sick, and 'classical' the healthy," said Goethe. Gobineau, like Goethe, belonged to the few healthy minds, the few "lucky strokes" of nature, of that most unlucky and unhealthy past century. He had been healthy enough to diagnose the sickness of his time, and could not possibly overlook the sickness of his new friend, Richard Wagner, and his Bayreuthian followers. The Germanisation of Christianity by means of a theatrical art, the redemption of the world by vegetables, the improvement of the race by more love-matches and other fads of the actor genius, must certainly have caused many a smile to appear on the lips of the critical Count. On the other hand he, no doubt, was too much of an *homme du monde* to give his whole mind to his histrionic host and the crowd of wild enthusiasts around him. It is nevertheless on record that he invariably entered a sort of mild protest against some of the more

popular ideas of the musical reformer. It was, for instance, in vain that Wagner, who of course, as a true son of his age, occupied himself with "social questions," tried to win over his new friend to Schopenhauer's philosophy of pity. To prefer in this world the poor to the rich, the fool to the wise, the sick to the healthy, was in Gobineau's opinion a great error. A brave and noble soul, he answered, is ready to help and give its best to the world in noble sacrifice by itself and quite independently of any philosophic teaching. To Christian resignation he opposed his pagan dignity, to Christian humility self respect, to tame forgiveness stoical forbearance or contempt, and to the passive and feminine virtues of faith, hope and love the antagonistic active and manly virtues of deed, daring and bravery in thought as well as in action.

And when it came to the equality of men he would not even listen. He likewise abhorred the "Teutonic" tendencies of Wagner, who in these days posed as Germany's truest protagonist and staunchest defender against the Jewish danger. Gobineau knew well enough that these Teutonic tendencies had caused in the past his *bête noire*, that mother of all modern revolutions, the German reformation. From his aristocratic point of view he could only see a heretic and a revolutionary in the modern German—and certainly he could never be persuaded by Wagner to believe in Germany's "great" reformer, Martin Luther. But he seems to have always been civil and tolerant toward his German acquaintance, his long travels, residences abroad and knowledge of mankind having no doubt taught him to wear that mask of bonhomie which the simple-minded are apt to mistake for affability and simplicity, but which is in reality nothing but cruel contempt There is a story related in the *Bayreuther Blätter*, according to which Wagner once praised the good influence of a well-brewed beer upon his favourite Luther and had asked Gobineau to join him in drinking the health of the famous miner's son. Gobineau is said to have winced a little, but after a while to have joined in with a smile, and the words:

"Very well, let us drink the beer to the health of Martin Luther." It must have been a delightful scene. Gobineau drinking beer in the company of Germans to the health of a superstitious monk—does that not remind one of Louis XVI. with the red cap of the revolution on his head giving friendly nods to his people below?

There is an article in the May-June number (1881) of the *Bayreuther Blätter*, entitled "Heroism and Christianity." It is a joint production of Montague and Capulet, of the Pagan and the Christian, of Gobineau and Richard Wagner. Gobineau wrote the article and Wagner added a preface of his own to it—and thus it became a most extraordinary document, reminding one of those Landsknecht-uniforms of the Middle Ages, of which one half was yellow and the other red, or perhaps, as in this case, one half black and the other white.

The black colour fittingly represents the gloom of Gobineau's thought. He again repeats in this article his pessimistic views of the European peoples whose distinguishing features are sucked out by the ever-progressing vampire of democracy, a monster which their want of health and character is unable to resist. The views of the Essay are reiterated, but since his residence in Asia Gobineau has noticed another cloud upon the horizon of Europe; the yellow danger, the imminent Mongolian expansion. This danger he thinks is even more accentuated by the unconscious help it received from those "European door-keepers," the Slavonic peoples, who will in time be only too ready to hand over to their Asiatic cousins the keys of Europe. The gradual decadence of Europe—thus Gobineau concludes—was announced long ago in the Essay: the only mistake with which he had to reproach himself, is that from an optimism peculiar to youth he had thought the development of this decadence much slower than it really was and will turn out to be.

And now let us listen to the innocent, the "white," the Christian preface-writer who naturally lives in hope, in love,

in faith, and in other clouds. In a very casual fashion, Wagner at first repeats Gobineau's ideas about the degeneration and decadence of mankind. He, like Gobineau, thinks that this degeneration was caused by the mixture of races which was brought about by an initial fault of the human race, inexperienced in its youth as it then was. This initial fault, it will be seen, has already a somewhat Semitic flavour: for by means of it the concept of "original sin" is smuggled into the system of Gobineau. But Wagner forgets or wishes to forget that Gobineau declares this fault to be absolutely fatal, ineradicable; for Gobineau, not being a theologian or a Teutonic metaphysician, preferred to stick to scientific observations, however disagreeable they might turn out to be. But Wagner knew what he was doing when he declared "decadence" to be a "fault" and a "sin." A sin, of course, allows of redemption; and by means of the redemption which our Christian has to offer, Gobineau's pessimism is turned into more hopeful channels. Man, no doubt, is a damnable sinner and a miserable decadent, but likewise a possible future hero—thus Wagner's secret thought runs. It is an astounding assumption, but what assumptions are impossible to pious souls, what benumbing of reason are they not capable of?

For our composer, who was now a Christian, was as such not allowed to lose hope in the sinner and the decadent, as did that gifted, though perhaps too gloomy, Gobineau. Wagner, therefore, in the latter half of this article, "Heroism and Christianity," expresses the firm belief, that out of the chaos of stupidity and impotence, which "our friend Gobineau" has laid bare, salvation is still possible. True, the blood of the most noble races has deteriorated, but even for the most humble race and individual there must be a way to hope and health. By means of that "only genuine Christian Sacrament, which consists in the symbolic consumption of the blood of Christ," a divine purification might be effected, and he, Wagner, would recommend this Sacrament as a sure antidote against the degeneration of

mankind which Gobineau had described in such a masterly manner in his Essay on the Inequality of Human Races.

Rightly, M. Seillière,* the intelligent French critic, who unfortunately is not poet enough himself to appreciate to a proper degree either a Gobineau or a Nietzsche, says "Talk history to a mystic like Wagner! Gobineau's labour on such a man is lost entirely. This thick-skinned interpreter of his thinks that the only consequence of Gobineau's gloom and bitterness will be to inspire a certain wholesome shock to our thoughtless age, to shake that easy optimism in which we still indulge, and thus to prepare us gently for that holy path, that path of sighs and tears that leads to Golgotha and the Cross. Is it possible to love each other more and understand each other less than this prefacer and his author have done?"

No, it is not; but, nevertheless, to this hopeless misunderstanding on the part of Wagner, Gobineau owes his discovery: without his blind friend, Gobineau might have remained unknown to this very day. The whole world would have been poorer for it, but the loss would have been mostly felt by the Germans, with whom Gobineau has become a popular hero, a protagonist of the Empire, a name to conjure with for all the enemies of the Fatherland: Jews, Catholics, Poles, Latins, and other second-rate people. But this popularity of Gobineau in Germany—an irony as great as that of Gobineau's discovery by a romantic musician—is entirely due to a misunderstanding of Gobineau on the part of the Germans, a misunderstanding, however, which is to some extent caused by what I consider as one of the rare flaws in Gobineau's system itself.

The hatred of the French Revolution and the doctrine of the Equality of man had thrown Gobineau into such antagonism against everything around him that he finally began to hate France down to her very historical roots.

* Ernest Seillière: Le Comte de Gobineau et l'Aryanisme Historique: Paris, 1903 (p. 370).

He was tempted to see charlatanism, theatricality and exuberant phrase-making (which are the characteristics of a democratic age) everywhere even in that grand early history of the Latin races, and thus became very unjust, I think, to the whole of Græco-Latin culture, and especially to the most flourishing ages of that culture, in Greece and Rome. Henceforth his ideal in history became the Germanic tribes of the Middle Ages, and their feudal institutions, which allowed a man to attach and defend his honour sword in hand—times, when a man was his own master still and not subjected to the law of *Polis* or *Urbs*. In *Polis* and *Urbs* the lawyers and phrasemongers would always prevail—among the warrior tribes of the Franks, the Normans, the Lombards, the glib tongue of sly plebeians had never to be feared, and a free and noble personality never stood in danger of being suppressed. Gobineau himself, isolated as he was amongst his plebeian surroundings, thought himself related to those ancient and noble tribes; he firmly believed in his descent from a Scandinavian and Germanic stock. He even wrote a book, "Ottar Jarl," in which the history of his ancestors is minutely described. This Ottar Jarl is a descendant of a Norwegian family of the ninth century, who, being a younger son, is disinherited from rural possessions according to law and consequently obliged to emigrate from Scandinavia. He becomes a pirate, descends upon the French coast, and there founds the feudal house of Gournay, the house from which Gobineau himself claimed descent. When our Count was French Minister in Stockholm, he one day made an excursion with some friends to those beautiful isles which, covered with pines, lie dotted in crystal waters all along the Swedish coast. Before a group of imposing ruins, Gobineau suddenly stopped and said: "I feel this is the place where I hail from"—a story which will set a good many people smiling. But it is a fact—which science, that satellite of poetical observation, may one day elucidate—that very sensitive people easily recognise the place where their ancestors have lived: there are Jews who at

once feel at home in the South and among Orientals, and the French Count may have experienced a similar sensation when his foot had touched that Scandinavian spot.

Thus we need not deny that Count Gobineau had Norman blood in his veins, but the conclusion he draws from this fact, the veneration he feels for this blood, ought to be somewhat critically examined. It was modesty after all on the part of Gobineau, it seems to me, if he attributed his nobility of thought to his Norman and Germanic ancestry. For Gobineau was, above all, what these tribes never were, a man of daring thought. And the objection which I would raise to Gobineau's idealisation and veneration of the ancient Germans is just this, that they were sadly lacking in all the higher elements of culture, sadly lacking in what Gobineau possessed —in ideas. In stating this I do not underrate the value of personal bravery and prowess as exhibited by these Franks, Lombards, and Normans, because these are virtues which our industrial age sadly lacks and urgently requires: but I do not consider these virtues alone sufficient. I am of the opinion that they only constitute a kind of barbarian greatness which can never be compared with that cultured greatness, that combination of great thought and great action which was the glory of Greece and Rome. Military prowess was possessed by such a race as the Huns, too; it was possessed, and is still possessed to some extent, by the Turks—but no one, I think, would set up Huns and Turks as model races for mankind. Where, I should like to ask the *manes* of Count Gobineau, are the ideas of his beloved Germanic tribes? Have they founded a religion like the Jews? Have they excelled in art, like the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians? In philosophy and tragedy like the Greeks, in government and law like the Romans? Have they bequeathed a holy or unholy book to the world—a book that could rival the Old Testament, the book of Manu, the tragedies of Sophocles, the manly history of Thucydides, the sweet poetry of Ovid and Horace? No, they have not. They have had no ideas, and,

though poetically endowed like all youthful and martial peoples, this gift was never strong enough to withstand the onslaught of Oriental thought, and thus their song of the Nibelungs, their Beowulf, and even their Edda, have come down to us in a half-Christianised dress. They have had no ideas of their own to oppose to the Semitic idea: that is the reason, the only reason, why they were conquered and converted by the mere breath of a Christian missionary. It was the want of the inner Holy fire, the want of strong and burning passion, it was in short the poverty of the race which will put Count Gobineau's much-beloved Germanic tribes for ever into the second rank, when compared for instance with that similar conqueror-tribe—the Arabs. The Arabs, too, were a martial people, and when they left their desert, they were as poor in earthly possessions as were the Franks and Normans; they had no art as yet and scarcely any written literature; but, when they had conquered the world, when they had gained their place in the sun, they at once proved that the germ of the great and the sublime was at least in them: they created that great Empire from the Tigris to the Guadalquivir in which art, science, and literature flourished, which kept the lamps of Hellenic thought burning in the midst of Christian darkness and which the Christianised Germanic tribes, the enemies of light, afterwards successfully extinguished. Rightly, therefore, and to this very day those historians, who though Christians are honest historians, regret the fall of Granada.

Why did Count Gobineau, universal historian that he was, fail to allude to Arabic civilisation, fail to relate the story of the fall of Granada? It is a story which might well have appealed to him, as a poet, just as it has appealed to a colleague of his, to one who was more nearly related to the Arabs—Heinrich Heine. In November, 1491, Boabdil, the last king of the Moors, came out of Granada and gave the keys of the town to the victorious Catholic sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella. Then, with a few followers, he left for the south, but upon a rocky eminence which commanded a last view of Granada he

checked his horse and, as his eyes for the last time wandered over the scenes of his departed greatness, his heart swelled and he burst into tears. "You do well," said his mother, when she saw him cry, "to weep like a woman for what you could not defend like a man." It was a Semitic mother who could speak these manly words to her son, words, no doubt, that caused a Semitic mother more pangs of pain than any other. Is it not almost certain that over his enthusiastic praise of the noble Germanic blood, Count Gobineau forgot that there was in the world a noble Semitic blood, a blood all the more important as it still exists amongst us almost in its racial purity?

IV

BUT happy that author whose writings have a decided weakness somewhere or contain a palpable untruth, for he is sure to be discovered! Unhappy that Homer who never nods, for he will nod for ever, and no discoverer or disciple will awake him, and no posterity will rise up to do honour to his message. And thrice happy the author whose weaknesses are even misunderstood: *sic itur ad astra*, only thus and then is he sure to find the way to the heart of humanity.

Count Gobineau, as we have seen, had sung the praise of the noble Germanic blood, of a blood which, as he thought, ran in his own veins, and which he rightly judged to be different from and superior to that of other mortals. It was certainly a fault of his racial system that he forgot even to mention the noble Arabic blood, but this omission, after all, only slightly interferes with the value of his book as an original piece of work. But precisely by this flaw, by the neglect of the Semitic blood, by this praise of the noble Germanic blood, has he endeared himself to the heart of the Germans, who, once the question of race came to the foreground in European thought, were most eager to establish their claim to a noble past and a noble blood. For the Germans are

people who live on thought and theories, people who consequently have to adapt themselves to any new theories that spring up on the intellectual horizon of our Continent. In this respect, they are very unlike the "materialistic" Englishmen, who in their innermost heart have a contempt for "braininess," who think they can do without "ideas," who know for a certainty that they will "muddle through" somehow, for Providence, that just Providence, cannot—in their opinion—help having strong British propensities. The German rather looks down upon this British contempt of ideas, this blind trust in Providence: it is his glory to have acted differently, to have always helped Providence by his own thoughts—although I have my doubts whether Providence does not prefer the British modesty and non-interference to the German over-zeal and obtrusiveness. Be this as it may, one thing is quite certain: theories that arise anywhere in Europe are sure, sooner or later, to attract the attention of the Germans, and living by theories as they do, he has sooner or later to adapt himself to the new and victorious thought. Of late this new thought has not been very favourable to the Germans; it has become more and more difficult to adapt the old Teutonic ideals to the new theories—and Germany has consequently become somewhat embarrassed. Not for long, though—what could embarrass that gifted nation of "poets and thinkers" for long? The idea of "race," for instance, was certainly a very perplexing one for the Germans, who, after all, have troubled about race less than any nation in Europe, who have never had an aristocracy worthy of the name, like the French and English, like the Poles and Italians: but why should a thinking nation be embarrassed by a new idea, if this nation is at the same time also a poetical one? Let the poetical gift of this nation, let its powers of idealistic interpretation play round the "New Thought," and the thought is rendered harmless and ready for adaptation. If we cannot adapt ourselves to the new theories—thus the Germans reason—let us adapt the theories and their exponents for our own

benefit, let us re-interpret them, let us poetise them, vaporise them, until . . . .

It is by means of this power of poetical interpretation, that the Germans have succeeded in making Gobineau a kind of national hero. No doubt this was a great feat of "poetic licence," but the licence was justified by success. Gobineau's name is uttered with the greatest respect all over the Fatherland, his books and letters have nearly all been translated: they have gone into many editions and are read all over the country, and Gobineau's "Renaissance" —five times translated into German—has even been on the répertoire of theatres. Many years ago, a Gobineau Society was formed in Germany; the ablest men of letters, scientists and politicians became members; to be a *Gobiniste* became a sort of patriotic duty—not to be a *Gobiniste* stamped one as an "enemy of the Empire." Gobineau has even been set up by these enthusiastic Teutonics as a sort of anti-pope against Nietzsche, and it has thus come about that the Frenchman is venerated in modern Germany with the same fervour as Nietzsche the German, is worshipped in France. But how was it done? What has Gobineau to do with modern Germany? How could the Germans appropriate him? The answer is: by means of their power of poetical interpretation. It is this German gift which has allowed the German nation, under the guidance of their princes and professors, to claim Gobineau's system for themselves and to apply it to their own history, past and present. They have made use of Gobineau's weakness, his exaggerated praise of the German conqueror tribes, but they have misunderstood or "poetically interpreted" even this weakness, and have quite innocently transferred his praise of the Germanic past to the Germanic present, his praise of the "Germanic hero" to the praise of the modern German citizen.

To Gobineau, modern Germany was as contemptible a country as modern France; for it was based, like France, upon a plebeian revolution, the Protestant Reformation, which he

most heartily detested. And it was not only the Germany of the Reformation that Gobineau disliked; it was modern Germany as well; it was the Empire itself, that glory of the Teutomaniac, that roused his doubts and his displeasure. Can this cause wonder? How could a profound thinker like Gobineau overlook the flaw in this Empire, this powerful organisation without aim, ideas or reason, this body without a soul, this incarnation of materialism on earth? How could a psychologist be deceived by that mask of foggy philosophy, romantic art and crazy idealism, behind which the modern German tries to hide his ignoble aspect? How could he be blinded by the "success" of such a motley crew, gained as this success was and is by the trampling down of every genuine individuality, of every valuable idea, of everything beautiful and noble? Thus even in the early days of the Empire, we see our Count in doubt about this modern Germany. "I understand," he writes to his friend, Professor Kellermann, of Tübingen, on August 18th, 1872, "the motives which have forced Germany into an excessive concentration of all her powers, but this very concentration is the surest way to paralyse all intellectual action, and thus your organisation will cost you so much, not only financially, but also physically and morally, that I do not think anything good for the life of the whole or the parts can ensue from it." What a true prophet spoke here! And what deaf ears he found and still finds! Or, should I, as an excuse, say, what poetical ears? The warnings of this prophet are ignored by his audience, his conclusions from the past are falsified and misunderstood, and his message for the future—race—is misapplied by these intoxicated patriots to the present day, to themselves. For the modern Germans pretend that they are a race, that they are Gobineau's ideal Germanic race, and that their success in this world is due to their pure and noble blood. A brewer, when he grows wealthy and successful, desires a title and must be on the look-out for a pedigree.

To the honour of truth, however, it ought to be stated that

it is not the true Gobineau who has become the god of the "cultured" modern Germans. After all, Gobineau was too much of an honest writer for this, too little of an idealist, too much of a man who never shirked facts and had uttered terrible truths, just as Stendhal, Mérimée, Nietzsche, and other brave Europeans had done. In order to make Gobineau palatable to the ordinary modern German, he had first to be remodelled and refashioned. It is a full-blown Englishman who has done Germany this service, an Englishman who has become Germanised, and who—just as converted Jews become more Christian than born Christians—has become more German, more idealistic, more of a poet than even the best German metaphysician. This man was Wagner's son-in-law, Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain.

Mr. Chamberlain's book, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*,* is a double pæan, a pæan to modern Germany and to Christianity in its Protestant form, which latter, however, if I understand Mr. Chamberlain rightly, is still open to some improvement by the Teutonic genius, especially gifted as this genius is in the high realms of religion. And not only in religion, but in other spheres as well; for, according to Mr. Chamberlain, ever since the sixth century all men who have produced anything in politics, ideas, or art, without exception, belonged to the Germanic stock. Thus this stock (in which Mr. Chamberlain, for safety's sake, includes the Celts and the Slavs, but whose most gifted branch is the Teuton) has created all the great and good things in this world, while on the other hand everything bad or inferior is of Latin or Semitic origin. Great Latins and great Jews who appealed to Mr. Chamberlain's taste are of course allocated by him to the Germanic stock. Thus Christ, as is proved by Mr. Chamberlain, was only born in a Jewish milieu, but was a Jew neither by race nor spirit (Vol. I., p. 351). Thus the great Renaissance was never a creation of the fine Latin and

* *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, by Houston Stewart Chamberlain; transl. by John Lees (London, 1911). The page quotations are taken from this edition.

Southern spirit, but a manifestation of the Germanic genius, which was racially predominant at that time in both northern and southern Italy. These ignoble Southerners, these slavish children of the "chaos of the peoples," with their "materialistic" Catholic Church governing them, would never have done anything without these pure-blooded idealistic Teutons who alone in this world have kept up the ideas of faith, race, nobility, and individuality. And as in the past so in the present: all true culture is Teutonic. For the Teuton is the artist of the modern world, he is "the only human being who can be compared with the Hellene—in him, too, the striking and specifically distinctive character is the simultaneous and equal development of knowledge, civilisation and culture." (Vol. II., p. 255.) As Lord Redesdale, who has written the preface to the English translation, rightly puts it: "The leitmotiv which runs through the whole book is the assertion of the superiority of the Teutonic family to all the other races of the world."

Though Chamberlain's conclusions are very different from Gobineau's, it will on closer examination be seen that the root of Chamberlain's system is to be found in Gobineau. Gobineau's is the idea of race, the idea of the pre-eminence of the Germanic stock, the idea of the rejuvenation of Rome by the invasion of the Germanic tribes, the idea of the manly and superior qualities of these tribes as opposed to Latin and Semitic inferiority: as also is Gobineau's the idea of the fraudulence and cowardice of the ancient Greeks and the little trust to be put in their historic narratives and the accounts of their victories. I feel quite certain that without Gobineau's epos, "The Decline and Fall of the Aryan," Chamberlain's "Rise and Progress of the Teuton" would never have been written. In place of Gobineau's gloomy and final vaticinations, of course, a "happy ending" had to be substituted, that "happy ending" which is so dear to our theatrical managers; for no true tragedy could be endured by our exhausted audiences, even were they composed of that

flower of the nations, the Germans. It would have been folly for any of them to produce a true Gobineau before that decadent public, accustomed as it is to romantic optimism or nerve-racking brutalities. The adaptation of Gobineau to a more modern taste was therefore essential, and in justice to the adapter and populariser, it should be added that he has done his work well. He has suppressed the best thoughts of Gobineau, weakened the strong ones, accentuated the bad ones ; dimmed, darkened and dulled the whole, and then added some ideas of his own which, though not in touch with truth, at least prove that our fortunate philosopher is in thorough touch with something else, to wit, his age. As a matter of fact, it is not difficult to please one's age if one belongs so closely to it as Mr. Chamberlain. *Quiconque ressemble au peuple, l'émeut*, as Goethe used to say.

In conformity with the spirit of the age, Chamberlain is a very religious and moral personality. No pagan, no Gobineau-gospel—and that in spite of Goethe—could have any general success in Germany, where the upper classes hypocritically cling to the Church in the vain hope of keeping down, by means of Christianity, the atheistic and revolutionary middle and lower classes, and where these latter sincerely but unconsciously adhere to the essence of Christianity, its morality, which is that of submissive or revolutionary slaves. Even the Catholics of Germany have something crude, bigoted and low-churchy about them, which separate them entirely from their Catholic brethren, those semi-pagans of France, Italy, and even Ireland. There is no country in Europe more hopelessly Nazarene than Germany ; and Chamberlain, by baptising that over-healthy pagan Gobineau and also otherwise watering down some of his ideas, at once appealed to those countless thousands for whom water is everything, and truth, other than religious or moral, too intoxicating. Mr. Chamberlain, however, did not only become a mere Nazarene, but a German Nazarene—that is to say, a Jew-hater. Gobineau, too, had hated Semitism, but Gobineau's hatred of Semitism was of a

very different kind. Gobineau's was an honest Antisemitism, it was, like Nietzsche's, an historical Antisemitism: it had nothing whatever to do with modern Antisemitism, that movement born from fear, envy, and impotence. This is how Count Gobineau speaks of the modern Jews: "In no period has daring thought in the realm of philosophy been wanting in the Jew. Nothing has changed with him in this respect, and I could quote several learned men of Bagdad who, by the audacity of their reasoning, are entirely worthy of the most heterodox spirits that their race has ever produced. The Jewish mind is, of its very nature, enquiring, and it is eager to extract from the wealth of this world the element of knowledge as well as the element of gold."—(*Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, p. 66.) Gobineau's Antisemitism (this must be upheld even in the teeth of German Jewry, which on account of the Teutonic misrepresentation of our author still looks askance at him) has nothing whatever to do with modern Antisemitism, it is not the Antisemitism of people who are (as Nietzsche has baptised them) "stepmotherly treated by nature" (*schlecht weggekommene*): it is an upright, a genuine, a gentlemanly Antisemitism, it is the Antisemitism of the aristocrat, who sees his very blood threatened by revolutionary religions. Both Nietzsche's and Gobineau's Antisemitism, therefore, included of course Christianity. Chamberlain, however, turns this Antisemitism of an *honnête homme* into the Antisemitism of the people and directs it, according to the "needs of the age," against the modern Jews to the exclusion of Christians. He likewise turns Gobineau's anti-classical and anti-Roman tendencies into modern channels, that is to say, against the modern Catholics, the Jesuits, and that Roman Church which is still such an eyesore to the German Protestant. All this, of course, was done in good faith, without the wish to deceive and entirely without bad conscience on the part of the author.

The *Foundations* had a wonderful success. All the leaders of thought from the German Emperor down to the

humblest schoolmaster were overflowing with delight. The German Emperor had a copy of the book sent to every school, and all the schoolmasters of the Fatherland were busy—with the additional help of the cane—in impressing upon the minds and bodies of the German youths their heroic descent. What they had long suspected, but did not dare to think, was now proved beyond all doubt; they were a noble, a pure race. Just as Molière's *bourgeois gentilhomme* was astonished and delighted when he was told by someone, that he wrote "prose," the *bourgeois allemand* was perhaps less astonished but even more charmed that he was himself "poetry" and "culture," that his very blood was heroic and holy, that he was a member of a race, as a matter of fact, of the noblest race on earth. And out of this race, so Chamberlain had assured him in his book, there would "blossom out a future and harmonious culture such as the world had never seen before, a culture incomparably more beautiful than any of which history has to tell, a culture in which men would really be better and happier than they are at present!" (See Author's Introduction, p. xcviii.) God was in His Heaven, all was right with the world, the triumph of the Teuton assured for ever. Standing upright in his triumphal car, with flashing eyes and quivering nostrils, this grandson of Arminius, captain no more of barbarian hordes, but of industry and of "culture" was driven up the Capitoline Hill to receive an enormous, well-deserved laurel wreath for his square, capacious, cultured head. Only one little important figure was missing in this noisy procession. In order to check the ὕβρις of the victorious conqueror, in order to restrain that pride which invariably comes before the fall, the Romans never forgot to employ a slave, who was seen standing next to the hero upon the quadriga and heard to whisper into his ear from time to time the warning, "Remember that thou, too, art mortal." This slave was wanting; but instead of the slave a herd of slavish and time-serving authors and critics assured the pure-blooded captain on the triumphal car that Chamberlain's book was the

last word on the subject, and that in this gifted Englishman the Teuton Achilles had at last found a heaven-inspired Homer who could do justice to his character and noble achievements in past, present and future.

Of course, there was likewise a great deal of profound dissent, there was also, from the more cautious critics, a demand for a closer study of the question and the acquisition of more scientific facts. But the fitting and the only answer to Chamberlain's gospel has never been given, nor, so far as I know, even been suspected. And how could it have been suspected? How could it have been thought that this author, this member of a pure race, this man "glorying in the consciousness of his pure race" (Vol. I., p. 269), would produce a real bastard book, a book in which two wholly incompatible ideas had been "crossed," two ideas by nature mutually exclusive of one another had been "married" and mixed together—that of race and that of Christianity? Has there ever been an unholier alliance, and that committed by an enemy of mésalliances, of cross-breedings, of purposeless intermarriages?

Race is a matter of selection and exclusion, something hostile to, or at least regardless of, the outer world. Christianity is the religion of "love," that is to say, it has nothing exclusive, but something obtrusive about it, especially if it is remembered that this declaration of "love" came from the lower classes. Thus Christianity from its beginning, and through all the ages up to this very hour, has had one aim, and that is to be a universal religion, a religion to be offered to all, a religion which, if accepted by all, would make out of humanity one great family of equal brethren. It was on account of this very idea that the first Christians separated from the Jews and founded that all-embracing religion which to-day is called Christianity—for the Jews themselves, or rather the Jewish Christians (as may be read in the Acts and the Pauline epistles) still held fast to the belief that their creed was not for everybody, that the Messiah had been sent

to them alone, and that not every stranger and outsider had a right to participate in the Salvation. The idea of race, of exclusiveness, of "the chosen people" still haunted these Jews even after they had become Christians, and over the question of race (not over the question *whether* the Messiah had come, but *to whom* He had come) Jews and Christians soon separated. Thus a modern Jew may pride himself on race, a modern nobleman, like Gobineau or Nietzsche, may pride himself on race; but never a true and modern Christian, least of all a German Christian. For the German Protestant Christian is again a *réchauffé* of the first Christian, he is (as Mr. Chamberlain himself sees) a Pauline Christian, that is to say, a rebel, a heretic, a democrat: just as the first Christians rebelled against the Jews, he—by means of his Reformation—has rebelled against the aristocracy of the Italian Renaissance, he owes his "Empire," his present position in Europe, to his rebellion. It is likewise he who—indirectly by the same reformation—instigated the French Revolution; it is he who has brought all the democratic values to the front in modern Europe; it is he who even to-day, with his four millions of Socialists, marches in front of all the European democracies. Only a few months ago (May 8th, 1912) the German Reichstag by a great majority asked the Government to bring in a Bill legalising in their colonies marriages between whites and blacks. That was indeed German, democratic, and Christian; but such people should never talk about race, for race was, is, and should be, the Germans' greatest abhorrence, an abhorrence which, if genuine, everyone can understand, and even tolerate to a certain extent. What cannot and must not be tolerated is the confusion of these two contradictory values—Race and Christianity.

It will be seen that my description of the German as a "hopeless Nazarene" needs some correction, the "hopelessness" in him being really more accentuated than the Christianity. In plain English: the German is modern—neither fish nor flesh, neither oil nor water, neither a Christian

nor an aristocrat. A real aristocrat *must* abhor the idea of Christianity, just as a good Christian ought to abhor the idea of race. But the bad Christians and the bad aristocrats have a less decided taste—they behave like that capricious prima donna, who woke up one morning with the idea, "Tea is good, chocolate is good, why not have both together?" and then ordered her maid to bring her a cup of tea and chocolate mixed. Mr. Chamberlain, with unconscious humour, frequently points in his great book to the dualistic nature of the German character—it is no doubt due to this dualistic nature of his that dualistic books, tea-and-chocolate books, like Mr. Chamberlain's, appeal to him so very strongly. Sixty-thousand copies of this "philosophic" production have now been sold in Germany. *Similia similibus.*

On the whole, however, Mr. Chamberlain himself—my sense of justice prompts me to state this—ought to be exempted from the blame attached to his German admirers and should not be accused of any want of consistency in his taste. Mr. Chamberlain has even a very pronounced judgment and has always protested against that astounding tendency of his readers to swallow everything, to muddle everything, and to digest for instance even such antagonistic natures, as Gobineau and himself. On several occasions, and with great eloquence, Mr. Chamberlain has stated* that he has nothing to do with Gobineau and that his name should never be mentioned in the same breath even with that of the French Count, who was a man of quite different stamp. It would be rash to conclude from this protest that he has the intention of deceiving his public, that he wishes to pose as an original genius, that he wishes to impress upon mankind the fact that he is not an epigone and populariser, but a creative spirit. This would be a great injustice to Mr. Chamberlain, who, it must be repeated, is, if nothing better, at least an honest man. The only conclusion to which his extraordinary and angry protest can lead us, is again a very honourable,

* See amongst others his *Wehr und Gegenwehr* (München, 1912), pp. 12-15.

though a negative one, namely, that Mr. Chamberlain does not belong to the numerous and disagreeable class of snobs. For a snob is a man who tries to get into touch with people above his station, and who, having gained access to the charmed circle, boasts of his distinguished acquaintances: there have even been snobs, who have accused themselves of having stolen silver spoons from a lord's table, only in order to let other people know they "have been there." But Mr. Chamberlain is quite a different man—he too, has been at a lord's table, but he never boasts about it, for he does not know that "he was there." And there was plenty of beautiful plate upon the table, but Mr. Chamberlain again did not know that it was silver. And the lord, who had lived in Oriental countries and had imbibed Eastern munificence with the air, had asked Mr. Chamberlain to help himself freely to everything on the table with the inclusion even of some of the valuable plate. Mr. Chamberlain consequently pocketed many silver spoons, but he considered them just ordinary spoons and did not attribute to them any special value. And then, when he came home, he procured plenty of shiny brass spoons (which look like gold), and partly with the lord's fine old silver and partly with his own shiny brass he feeds his numerous "Aryan" public, which is not very expert in matters artistic and much prefers Mr. Chamberlain's brass spoons to the count's old silver. It were only to be wished that Gobineau could return from Walhalla and assist once, as the guest of the evening, at such a grand "Aryan" dinner. No doubt he would experience a kind of satisfaction for having been a true though pessimistic prophet of the future of the Aryan. But, good heavens, how sorry he would have been for having wasted his silver spoons!

V

In Oriental towns, towards evening, when the talk and the bustle of the market is at its loudest, a voice from above is

suddenly heard, ringing out into the crystal air over house-tops and bazaars, over gardens and fountains, over rivers and coffee-houses, a voice that drowns with its clear and metallic force the noisy talk of the vulgar crowd in the market place below. It is the voice of the Muezzin who from the top of the minaret calls the faithful to prayer. Let us listen to him. Let us forget the literary market place below with its Jewish and Christian, French and German dealers in modern ideas, let us no longer heed that loud, crowded, and alas! so empty shopland, where the honest merchants are not intelligent, where the intelligent merchants are not honest, and where the crowds of sellers and buyers are neither one nor the other. Let us listen to the voice from above, let us listen to the Muezzin, let us listen to Gobineau's own words and ideas.

In light, sweet, and joyful tones this voice rings out of the pages of Gobineau's *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*. The first chapter of this book on the moral and religious character of the Asiatics, has justly become famous, and, with its lucid power of argument, will come as a surprise to many intelligent Europeans, accustomed as they are to look down upon all Asiatics as inferior beings. Gobineau is able to undermine many of their prejudices, for some of the so-called Asiatic vices are only vices in the eyes of the simple-minded European, and really turn out to be virtues, if only seen in the proper light. Thus, that dreaded Asiatic hypocrisy (a practice so common in Central Asia that it has received the special name of *Ketman*) is, according to our exploring ambassador, only a mask put on by the more profound Oriental mind in order to keep truth away from inferior or vulgar souls. Gobineau compares this behaviour of the modern Asiatic with that of the Greek philosophers, who likewise taught that all truth of a superior kind should be enveloped in mystery, for it was not reasonable to throw higher wisdom before inferior and unworthy beings. But while thus paying a high compliment to the intelligence and profundity of the Asiatic, Gobineau does not forget that draw-

back which every high development of the poetical and psychological faculties must bring in its train. It is this superabundance of thought which makes the Asiatic as much of a fantastic dreamer as a superabundance of common sense makes his European brother a dry matter-of-fact creature. And it is this crowd of ideas and theories, which constantly chase and supplant each other in the mind of the Asiatic, that are the cause and source of his political weakness. This over-intelligence, as it might be called, isolates our Asiatic from his fellows to such an extent that collective action (based as it always must be upon uniformity of sentiment in a large number of people) becomes almost an impossibility among the gifted Asiatic races. As a consolation it might be conceded to the Asiatic that fools find it much easier to combine, first because they are obliged to do so on account of their weakness, and then because no individuality of their own makes them shrink from too close a contact with their brethren. In Asia, Count Gobineau tells us, with an ironical side-glance at Europe, fools are the greatest exception.

But the best part of the book, and the greater part of it, is dedicated to the history of the Babists, a Persian sect founded shortly before Gobineau came to Persia, by a young and spirited Persian who was called "The Bab." It is a strange tale that our author has here to tell, a story which seems to us more than familiar, reminding us as it does of the common religious bonds of Asia and Europe, of the holy tales of our own gospel. Was it the intention of Count Gobineau—and this is a question that will easily occur to a critic who is accustomed to look for the meaning between the lines—to write a parody on the ancient document of the Christian faith? I do not think so for a moment, for Gobineau had, like many Catholics, even free-thinking Catholics, a sort of shyness about touching upon religion in too outspoken a manner. If there is parody, it is entirely unconscious, but parody undoubtedly there is. There is the Saviour, the "Bab," that is to say, "the only door by which one can reach the knowledge of

God," a quiet, studious, patient, and somewhat mystical youth, *une âme douce et un peu rêveuse*, as Gobineau describes him. He has quite a number of interesting, though hardly novel, ideas in his head: how to bring man happiness in this world, how to unite under one ethical roof the Jew, the Christian, and the Moslem, how to emancipate and enlighten the fair sex, likewise how to be good and charitable though rich, and how to be just and forgiving though dealing with criminals and enemies. There was a faint flavour of Buddhistic sweetness, I think, in this attractive personality, who by his charming and persuasive manner easily converted all those who came into contact with him. But these new converts, less Buddhistic, of course, and more impulsive than the Master, tried to strengthen peaceful persuasion by other means. They openly accused the authorities of immorality and corruption, they ran about the streets looting, rioting and threatening and insulting the mullahs (clergy), and thus finally forced the Government to intervene between them and their accusers—an intervention that caused a bloody revolution in two provinces and was only suppressed with the greatest difficulty. The Saviour, as seems to be the habit of Saviours, had promised to bring peace and happiness, but had in reality brought the sword—a sword, which, once unsheathed, naturally begins now to threaten himself and his two most faithful followers. And thus more and more the story begins to remind us of Asia, never-changing Asia. Those in authority, again wrongly assuming that the execution of the Saviour would suppress a rebellion—have decided to do away with him. A sham action is brought against him, he is searchingly questioned by the judges, who are bent upon his ruin, he is asked for miracles by the Mullahs, who doubt his gift and his inspiration, but he, according to his followers, confounds them all. Well, however, though he stands the test, he is nevertheless condemned to death by his persecutors, frightened as these are about the progress of the rebellion.

The day of execution has come. From early morning till late

in the evening the Bab and his two disciples are conducted, under the weight of their chains, through the town of Tabriz, the infuriated mob screaming and shaking their fists at them, striking the defenceless victims in the face amid screams of laughter at every successful blow. Then one of the disciples, as the result of all the pain and shame heaped upon him, gives way, and throwing himself on to the ground, begins to weep most bitterly. The captain of the guard promises him freedom if he will curse the Bab. And he curses the Bab. Then the captain of the guard asks him to spit into the Bab's face. And he spits into his face, and is then set free; but only in order to repent and commit afterwards, like Judas, a sort of expiatory suicide.

Then the other follower, a rich citizen of the town of Tabriz, is worked upon to give up the Bab; with truly fiendish cleverness his young wife and his children are fetched from the bazaar, they are confronted with him and they implore him to abjure his creed, to live again happily with them as before; but the man simply turns his head and remains firm, only asking as a favour to be executed before his Saviour. The sun begins to set; the two are about to suffer the extreme penalty, and when in front of a large crowd they both hang side by side over the wall of the citadel, waiting to be shot, the faithful disciple is heard saying to the Bab: "Master, art thou satisfied with me?" . . . O Asia, there thou art once more with thy fanatics, thy dreamers, thy rebels, with thy martyrs, who willingly shed their blood for "truth," and thy Saviours who triumphantly wear the crown of thorns! There thou art once more, thou continent of eternal recurrences, putting to shame thy little sister Europe with her innocent belief in progress!

But still there is "progress," and the progress lies with the narrator who this time tells the holy story. It is related in a cold and sceptical manner, very accurately to be sure, but not without touches of irony and Voltairian wit, by a man who decidedly has some doubts about all Saviours and all

enthusiasts, by a man who knows from his own experience that it is more difficult to live for truth than to die for it, by a man who has a silent smile even for self-sacrifice; for he knows that self-sacrifice comes most easily to those whose self does not matter much, to those who sacrifice little with their "selves." A *grand seigneur* is relating this extraordinary story, a man who is freethinking without being unprincipled, gay without being foolish, warm-hearted without being gushing, and cool without being phlegmatic or platitudinarian. It is an important contribution to literature: the first narrative of a holy movement, by an unholy and sober pen. It is a decided improvement upon a very holy book: it is a gospel written by a gentleman.

But let no one believe that this refined gentleman always preserves his refinement of manner. True, the tenor of the Count's literary work cannot be compared to that of the more passionate Nietzsche, whose mighty curses on civilisation run into eighteen volumes and whose only prototypes in literature—prototypes standing, though, for the opposite ideal—are the ancient Jewish prophets. But let no one be mistaken by this outward appearance of more grace, repose, and restraint: at bottom, it must be repeated again and again, Gobineau and Nietzsche are men of the same stamp, and the French Count can raise his voice to the same dangerous pitch as the German, or rather anti-German philosopher. And on these rare occasions, we entirely miss that "Greek Harmony," that "golden mean," which is so dear to the Philistine worshippers of classical antiquity, we look absolutely in vain for that "sweetness and light," which a gifted, though Victorian, author once so urgently recommended to his public; true, there is light, but only for those who can see; true, there is sweetness, but only for people with healthy and not over-fastidious tongues. Listen only how our Count describes his own time, hear what he thinks of his contemporaries, see in what colours this master-author paints the picture of what he considers the universal slavery:

Have a look at the world around you. Do you recognise its supreme barbarism—not a youthful, bold, courageous, picturesque, happy barbarism, but a savagery that is ugly, treacherous, repellent, ill-humoured, that will kill all and create nothing? At any rate, admire its size, which is indeed enormous; admire the beautiful arrangement of its tripartite division; at its head, the motley tribe of the babblers! They lead everywhere, carry the keys, coin phrases, weep on finding themselves deceived, declare that they would never have imagined. . . . Here now are the fools! They are everywhere, in front, at the side, in the rear; they run about, bustle and grow excited, their sole business being to prevent anything from becoming ordered or decided before they are in a settled state themselves. But what is the use of their becoming settled? Hardly has one of their companies declared itself satisfied than other hungry swarms come up at a run to start the whole process afresh.

And finally, here are the beasts. The babblers have let them loose. . . . . You ask me what I make of this pandemonium. I interpret it for what it is—stupefaction, destruction and death. . . . .

Would you wish to spare this rabble, if you held in your hands a sure means of destroying it? That is your business! As for me, lend me for a moment the thunderbolts of Jupiter and you shall see! But I shall only destroy so much as is necessary of the irresponsible herd of beasts. . . . . It is not fit to discern anything; I do not attribute to it a soul, and it is not the herd's fault if it cannot be controlled. Nor do I wish to go in for any violent measures against the fools! I do not declare to you that they are the salt of the earth, but they assuredly are the pickle. We can, if need be, put up with them, and if we hang a few of them occasionally, the rest can be employed, if not in honourable, at any rate in useful occupations. Besides, it must be admitted, our planet produces them naturally without waiting much to be asked! The world, whatever we may say or do, could not succeed in getting rid of them, nor perhaps even in dispensing with them.

As to the babblers, I should be merciless. They are the vainglorious and criminal authors, the sole and detestable initiators of universal degeneration, and the rain of my fiery bolts would ruthlessly pour down upon their perverse heads. No, such a crew does not deserve to live: nay, this croaking vermin cannot live and let the world live in orderly fashion by its side. The great flourishing epochs of Humanity were those when such reptiles did not crawl upon the steps of power. Away with them!

Would anyone believe that a passage of such honest indignation—against the people, if you please, not against the "ruling classes"—was penned in the middle of that mob-petting nineteenth century? In the midst of the century of revolutionary slaves? In the midst of the era of romanticism, sentimentality, brutality, eccentricity, and idealism? Still it was written, written, of course, without reaching the long ears of that democratic age, but written nevertheless for a juster

posterity—and the passage is found in what should be considered as one of the finest books of Gobineau, a novel published by him in 1874 in Stockholm, called the *Pléiades*.

While the Essay, and that in spite of its good points, will always have to be considered as a youthful production, the man Gobineau comes out best and fully developed in the book of his advanced years, the *Pléiades*. There is no more discussion here as in the Essay about colour and nobility, Gobineau has modified to a certain extent that scientific idea of his younger days about a fine Aryan race that had fallen readymade from heaven, and was only spoiled by the blood of inferior stocks. The artist has here got the better of the philosopher and his system, and, although the system was upheld by Gobineau till the end, it does not interfere in the least with this novel. And for this reason some of the Count's dark pessimism has become latent, there is hope in the book, for Gobineau has discovered a clearing in the dismal forest of democracy, he has noticed that there is some nobility left on earth in spite of all popular laws, all fine literature, and all "spread of education." True, these higher qualities are only possessed by a very few individuals, who have managed to keep themselves, though with great difficulty, afloat after the universal shipwreck of aristocratic civilisation. But what does it matter? They are still there; Gobineau has detected them, he rejoices over the brilliant discovery, and what is more, he gives us in this novel the bright portraits of these men, standing out from the dark background of universal slavery around them. There are men and women to be met here, who, like certain stars in the nocturnal sky, brilliantly outshine the millions of minor luminous bodies around them, men and women of light and brightness, who greet each other with flashing eyes over the heads of their poorer surroundings, men and women, who belong to the greater stars on the human firmament, who belong—hence the title of the book—to the *Pléiades*.

In the first pages of the novel we are introduced to some of the *Pléiades*, three travellers, a Frenchman, a German, and an

Englishman, who begin their tale with the announcement: "We are three calenders, sons of kings." Gobineau, the admirer of the Orient, is imitating here the tales of "Thousand and One Nights," in which the Arabian storyteller regularly begins with, "I am the son of a king." These magical words —thus Gobineau explains—indicate that "the hero is endowed with special gifts, with rare qualities, which make him entirely different from the ordinary crowd of people around him." "I am the son of a king," however, Gobineau takes care to add, does *not* mean that he is really the son of a king, and that his father was not a merchant, artist, soldier, ironmonger, or stationmaster; it only signifies one thing: "I am—no matter where I come from—of a generous and courageous temperament, and I am a stranger to most of those influences which generally move and interest other human beings around me. My taste is not that of everybody—I have my own feelings on all subjects; I do not love or hate according to the leaders and criticism of the papers. The independence of my ideas, the absolute liberty of my opinions, are the certain indications and privileges of my noble origin. . . ." And where do these extraordinary qualities come from? Through the mouth of one of the other travellers Gobineau gives the answer. "They arise from a sort of mysterious and native combination: it is a union in one individuality, of those noble, or, if you will, divine qualities, which his ancestors long ago possessed to the fullest degree, qualities which the unwholesome and undignified alliances with inferior beings may have suppressed, or may have only disguised for some time, but which nevertheless did not die entirely, but suddenly developed and blossomed out again in these after-born, the sons of the kings." The French traveller adds to this: "Thus there exist in the world of to-day a number of men, women and children, and that in all nations alike, whose personality is composed of the most precious atoms of their most precious ancestors, and who form an aristocracy of perhaps no more than 3,500 people in the whole world."

But how shall they make themselves heard? How is this aristocracy, submerged and nearly drowned as it is, to rise again to the top? How can they survive in an age like the present? Are not those few aristocrats, discovered by Gobineau in all classes of the population, much too isolated to be able to withstand the torrent of vulgarity around them? And how can they know one another, how can they hold out a helping hand to one another? Is not the aristocratic nature by itself adverse to that "combination" and "union" which has rightly become the panacea of all the weak, of all the democrats? Does it not rather prefer to stand alone? Does it not even rejoice in standing alone? Is there not a certain mixture of shyness and pride in the aristocrat, which forbids him to address others, to ask others for help, to complain to others, or even to open his heart to others? And is the aristocrat's shyness not justified, has he not been taught by hundreds of shameful experiences how he will be misunderstood, or what is worse, what fine specimens of humanity will understand him or pretend to understand him? Can he forget that it was the "Swine" that rushed first into Nietzsche's garden? Is he not in his innermost heart sure of the sad fate that he lives in a desert, of the sad fate that he *has* to live in a desert, and that his only companions there, if not swine, will be asses and camels?

Gobineau has an answer to all these questions, he knows a way out of our difficulties, he proves that—though not shirking any of the terrible facts of our wild present-day life—he is able to master this life, he is able to be a true guide through the wilderness of this life. It is through the mouth of the German Prince John Theodor that he gives a lesson to those isolated beings, whose strength among the uncounted numbers of weak people is in danger of becoming broken, or "adapted to the environment"—a lesson, though, which is not a social, a Christian, or an altruistic one. For the German Prince has the audacity to recommend to those aristocrats: "Look after yourself, see that you do not lose yourself, don't trouble about

anything but the welfare of your own souls." But, perhaps, this after all is a Christian lesson, for is it not likewise one of the imperative demands of the Christian religion to look after one's soul? And it is this that the Prince recommends:

> I consider the honest man, the man who feels in himself a soul, has more than ever the imperious duty of recoiling back upon himself. This is peculiarly the work of times such as ours. All that society loses does not disappear, but takes refuge in individual lives. The whole is small, wretched, shameful, repulsive. The isolated being soars up and expands, and, as in Egyptian ruins, in the midst of a heap of rubbish, misshapen and unrecognisable débris, crumbled and shattered buildings, often difficult to restore, there survive and rise up towards heaven some giants, some obelisks, whose height maintains the noblest idea, perhaps an idea superior to what was formerly the temple or the town now razed for ever; so nowadays men who are isolated, but at the bottom more noteworthy, more deserving of our admiration than were their precursors, help to keep up the notion of what the noblest and loftiest of God's creatures should be . . . . . To work at ourselves, to raise what is good in us, to subdue what is evil, to stifle or at least to shelve our worst instincts—this is henceforth our duty, the only duty that is of any avail!

There is a Christian ring about this passage, is there not? Yet it cannot be Christian, and it is not Christian, for the very reason that Gobineau practised what he preached, which the Christian, at least if there is a shade of healthy instinct left in him, never does. And Gobineau practised what he preached, though he, as an aristocratic writer, as a leader of humanity, had no need to do so, though he had full liberty to claim exceptional rights on account of his exceptional duties.

It is the duty only of the Christian—as a democrat—to live up to his principles. This duty, however, the Christian carefully avoids, and all the more carefully, the more of a Christian he is. A Bismarck, who "edits" a foreign telegram, causes a bloody war through it, and with all this humbly goes to Communion; a Tolstoi, who preaches the abolition of private property, but hands his own over to his wife—who recommends strict chastity in his *Kreuzersonata*, but begets a child himself a year after its publication—that is Christian, those (and many other discordant celebrities with them), were the true Christians, the great Christians of the nine-

teenth century. But the non-Nazarene noblemen of that time, such as Gobineau and Nietzsche, though at full liberty to live a hypocritical life, never did live it, nor were they obliged to live it, nor could they have lived it, for the purity of their character and intelligence would not have allowed to them what it apparently allows to all pious folk. Not to them was it granted to go through life making concessions right and left, not theirs the strength to live a life of contradiction and despair, not theirs the weakness never to approach, never to criticise Christian values; but not theirs either that religion of the Redeemer who apparently redeemeth His faithful servants of any serious thoughts on an unprincipled existence, not theirs the religion of the Comforter, who comforteth them through all the discomforts of a bad conscience, so that they live honoured and idolised by all human kind to an old age!

There is no doubt that Gobineau's life in the midst of these comfortable great and small Christians was not a very enviable one. Nietzsche, as is well-known, went mad over the solitude of such an honest life in the midst of vile and stupid surroundings, and of Count Gobineau we know—if we could not read it between the lines of his writings—that he was only too frequently near the abyss of despair. "The principal thought of great minds is not to break," our author used to remark frequently, an opinion doubly significant, in the mouth of such a joyful, witty, spirited companion, such as according to the testimony of all contemporaries, German and French alike, Count Gobineau usually was. In Stockholm, especially, he seems to have suffered. He went there alone, his wife stayed away from the northern climate for reasons of health, and during his whole sojourn he apparently experienced only little desire to mix with the world at large. His lodgings were in a very quiet, and not even fashionable street, his whole mode of life was so simple that his colleagues of other nations frequently scoffed at it; the bell outside his chambers is said to have consisted of a hare's foot, and when this was rung,

the Count's only companion and servant, a Syrian Christian, appeared and asked the visitor into a drawing-room, whose furniture was as old-fashioned and "out of season" as the ideas of its proprietor. Honoré Michon—this was the name of the servant—became Count Gobineau's dragoman, when he went to Persia; he hated Europe as heartily as did his master, but he loved his master more than he hated Europe, and was so devoted to him that he would never leave him afterwards; he would have gone to the North Pole—so the talk in diplomatic circles ran—if France had stood in need of a representative there and had singled out Gobineau as her Ambassador. Gobineau was likewise heartily attached to him and left the whole management of his modest establishment to the tender care of the Syrian, whose principal task was to look after two green parrots. But while ordinary minds are broken or "converted" by such uncongenial surroundings as two parrots and an exotic servant undoubtedly are, the sterner characters, as Gobineau rightly suggests in the *Pléiades*, are elevated and spurred on by adverse circumstances, and thus we owe to the solitude of Count Gobineau not only his best novel, but also that other book of his upon which his fame principally rests, the book translated here—*The Renaissance.*

It was only natural that the artistic imagination of a Gobineau willingly turned back to that golden time of the post-Christian era, to that only time of the Christian era which was no longer Christian, to that time when Christianity lay vanquished and broken in the very heart of Christianity, in Rome itself; to the time of the Renaissance. In his predilection for the Italian Revival, Gobineau only proved once more his intimate and genuine relationship to that best school of European thought, to those few eminent poets and critics, who had all hated the Semitic infection around them, who had all abhorred the Christian revolutionary spirit, who had all turned their backs upon the slaves and their clamorous desires for liberty and equality. In the age of the Renaissance

it had been—so they all saw with deep envy—*their* turn; it was the age of liberty for them, for the best, the intelligent, the daring, the brave, the proud, the beautiful—the age for an enlightened aristocracy of birth and spirit. There was liberty then, because there was no equality, for where there is liberty there can be no equality, and where there is equality there can be no liberty. Liberty is the requirement of the few, equality the wish of the many—and Gobineau's age, having declared for the many, had driven its most valuable, its only useful members into despair, madness, suicide, or at least into isolation. No wonder, those few isolated beings—a Goethe, a Stendhal, a Nietzsche, a Gobineau, and even a Heine—turned their saddened eyes back to the opposite age, to the age of freedom for them, the generous, loving, free-spirited and brave; to the age, when Kings, Popes and Statesmen were not yet servants of the mob and of the State, but masters of the State, of their own individualities, of their own wishes, and above all had wishes and desires, that corresponded to those of the great artists and writers of their time. Noble Renaissance, to what depth of despair and darkness has the world "progressed" since then!

It was left to this late-born son of the Renaissance, this pagan by heart and intelligence, this super-Christian *gentilhomme*—it was left to Gobineau to give us in the following pages a true historical and poetical picture of the Renaissance, such as none of his or our own contemporaries have been able to present to the world. Himself a scholar, a poet, a sculptor, and likewise an ambassador, he was so nearly related to that glorious Italian age and its versatile genius, to a Michael Angelo and a Leonardo da Vinci, that an insight into the period and into the character of its leading spirits came to him naturally and instinctively. And thus here, over the head of four centuries, one lonely but kindred spirit speaks to his equals, to his true and only, but alas, departed brethren. He understands them, with their fears and their hopes, their loves and their hatreds, their virtues and their vices—he rightly diagnoses

what ruined them, he rightly divines what had elevated them. Justice itself speaks out of the pages of the book, and that highest kind of justice, an innocent, childlike, a poet's justice, a justice that is high above moral prejudices. The clear and benevolent sun of Gobineau's thought shines upon weak and strong, upon Christians and Nobles, upon Protestants and Catholics, upon populace and artists, upon saints and criminals alike, and wherever its rays fall, they warm, they adorn, and they enlighten. A man like Luther, with whom Gobineau could hardly have had any sympathy, is brought nearer to our understanding, nay, to our heart; he too, that great destructive spirit, that great unconscious evildoer, could not have acted otherwise. A man like Savonarola, that monster of morality, that Puritan of the renascence, that "Bab" translated into European and Nazarene, is appreciated by our poet, a little too much, one would even think, especially when this moralist is said to have influenced the great Michael Angelo, whose morality was certainly of a different and higher order. And not only the moral and revolutionary heroes, the rebels and the Protestants, open their hearts to the magical key of the Count's genius, but likewise their enemies, the Catholics, the faithful sons of the ancient Church, the opponents and repressors of the Reformation. There is Charles V. and his son, Philip II., stern and unbending both, typical respresentatives of law and order, men, who, though rightly considering the "Calvinistic and Lutheran abomination as a cancer in the flank of the Church," proceed to cure that cancer with fire and iron; favouring the Jesuitical order, re-establishing the mediæval inquisition, re-introducing the Christian faith upon the Papal chair, and thus committing more murders and atrocities than that "monster" Cæsar Borgia himself.

And murders and atrocities, which Gobineau in his innermost heart utterly condemns, for, as he is careful to inform us, these crimes of the Reformation and the counter-Reformation were, compared with those of Cæsar Borgia, absolutely sense-

less, because they were religious crimes. There is not the slightest doubt that Count Gobineau's sympathies, in spite of his great tolerance and his poetical benevolence towards even the religious people of the period, are entirely on the side of the pagans, of the Popes and their artists, on the side of a Julius II. and Cæsar Borgia, of a Machiavelli, and Michael Angelo. Nor is the reason for this far to seek: his book is written in favour of the Master-Morality, and Gobineau's secret endeavour is to throw suspicion upon the prevailing and all-powerful Morality of his good and brave, though neurotic, feminine, and prosaic contemporaries. In a manner that will frighten many readers even to-day, Gobineau's deep, manly persuasion of "one right and duty for me, one right and duty for you" rings out of an audacious scene, that scene, where Pope Alexander VI. defends his son Cæsar Borgia before his sister Lucrezia, whose husband, Don Alphonso d'Aragon, Cæsar Borgia has just strangled:—

He is not a monster, my daughter, but a ruler who could not enter his destined sphere but at the price of the most sustained and sometimes the most pitiless effort. Listen to me, Lucrezia, and don't raise your hands to heaven. . . . I am trying to awaken in you what I know to be true, clear-cut and powerful sentiments. . . . . My daughter, you are as beautiful as Pride, you are Strength itself! Hence I will speak to you. . . . Know then that for that kind of persons whom fate summons to dominate others, the ordinary rules of life are reversed and duty becomes quite different. Good and evil are lifted to another, to a higher region, to a different plane. The virtues that may be applauded in an ordinary woman would in you become vices, merely because they would only be sources of error and ruin. Now the great law of this world is, not to do this or that, to avoid one thing and run after another: it is to live, to enlarge and develop one's most active and lofty qualities, in such a way that from any sphere we can always hew ourselves out a way to one that is wider, nobler, more elevated. Never forget that. Walk straight on. Do only what pleases you, but only do it, if it likewise serves you. Leave to the small minds, the rabble of underlings, all slackness and scruple. There is only one consideration worthy of you—the elevation of the house of Borgia and yourself.

But Cæsar Borgia failed: the story of his ghastly death is vividly told in one of the scenes of the "Renaissance." And, with Cæsar Borgia, failed the whole of the Renascence: through the quarrel between that *par nobile fratrum*, the

Church and the Reformation (of which the less noble was the Reformation), art, life, health, beauty, everything good and noble and great was again banished from the world for centuries. "Thou hast conquered again, O Galilæan!" But hast Thou really conquered? Hast Thou really succeeded in eradicating out of all human breasts the yearning after something higher, nobler, and stronger, hast thou really extinguished in all human hearts the desire for joy, for light, for wisdom, and for beauty? Is the Renascence quite as dead as Thou wishest and as Thou thinkest, Thou humble and pale Galilæan, Thou enemy of rosy cheeks and proud necks? No, no, it is not dead, and it was never as dead as Thou hadst hoped and desired, and how little dead it was, is proved by the following beautiful pages of the French nobleman, who rightly lets his Michael Angelo predict an eternal life for that grand age, in spite of Thy triumph and Thy premature exaltation. "We are bequeathing," thus run the last words of the aged Michael Angelo, "We are bequeathing a great legacy, great examples. . . . The earth is richer than it was before our coming. What is to disappear will not disappear altogether. . . . The fields can rest and remain fallow for awhile: the seed is in the clods. The fog may spread and the grey and watery sky become covered with mist and rain, but the sun is above. . . . Who knows what will come again?"

I know it—and know it for a certainty—a new Renascence. The dawn of this age is upon us: soon the sun of reason will rise again and his first rays will dissipate the fog of superstition and the nightmare of democracy. May the first translation of this truly great book help to prepare the Anglo-Saxon world for this coming new age! May it find readers worthy of its great ideals! May it give light and strength to those upon whose shoulders the heavy task of leadership may be destined to fall!

OSCAR LEVY.

LONDON, 1913.

FIRST PART

SAVONAROLA

BOLOGNA.

1492.

The garden of the monastery of the Fathers of St. Dominic. Midnight. The sky is clear, cloudless and deep ; the stars sparkle ; the moonlight penetrates even under the archways of the square cloisters, surrounding the space planted with great trees and fragrant plants. On the moonlit walls are fresco paintings ; red robes and blue cloaks, pallid faces, clasped hands ; aureoled heads of saints, men-saints and women-saints, all radiant with happiness. In the midst of the courtyard, on a flight of five or six stone steps, a marble crucifix, fashioned in thirteenth-century style, portraying on the arms of the crucifix the witnesses of the crucifixion. Around this cross, a broad avenue where the Prior of the monastery is walking ; on his right, Fra Girolamo Savonarola ; at the latter's side, Fra Silvestre Maruffi.

FRA GIROLAMO: Yes! The time has come. The hour strikes! Now or never is the moment to raise on high the Word of God and spread it throughout the world. Darkness retreats. Light is re-born, and casts upon ancient error the full force of its damning ray. How many demons are at work about our misfortunes! How they stir the fire! How they fan the flame that seeks escape! We must repel them! We must make the present age less shameful than its precursor! We must shake men up from the somnolence of their forefathers, but not to put in its place the awakening of evil! We must illumine the nations—guide them—lead them—drive them! "Ah, brother," you will say, "how would an abortion such as you be capable of a task like that?" You have read of David, and know the deeds of that wretched shepherd?

THE PRIOR: No doubt! But what voice from on high summons you to so lofty an undertaking?

FRA GIROLAMO: God is speaking to me, God impels me! The conviction that throttles me, the transports that I feel cannot deceive me!

FRA SILVESTRE: It is true! He is right! His learning, his eloquence, his virtue, are not these all signs? Where do you hope to find signs more striking? Is he not bound to make use of his gifts?

THE PRIOR: I deny nothing. But why such vehemence? Can we not go forward with measured step? What is it, after

all, that you claim, Fra Girolamo? If I take your meaning aright, it is nothing less than to reform the Church and to lead back high and low alike to the keeping of the Gospel's laws. Do you look on that task as easy? Do you forget that the doctors and the councils have but lately foundered on this very rock, not to mention the fact that we live under the crozier of Alexander VI.? What a moment you are about to choose, great God! for speaking to the world of self-restraint!

FRA GIROLAMO: God knows not "a moment"—all moments are His! I tell you once more: the hour has struck, it is time to act! All is changing in our present epoch, already so different from the ages that have gone before; all is in froth and ferment; from a fresh centre, with a fresh horizon, will the universe henceforth unfold to us its sights. It will make for good if religion raises the cross; it will make for evil if the ever-active efforts of the wicked uproot and overthrow this tree of shelter. See you not what is coming to pass? Counterfeit sages are rising up and tearing from the walls the musty and worn-out tapestry that delighted former ages. Italy is full to bursting of unbridled adventurers, of upstart princes, of hireling soldiers, of tyrants of cities, despots of castles, rebel peasants, quarrelsome burgesses, and all inheritances great and small are the prey of this rabble, joined by the wolves that come to us in packs from Spain and France. And for all that, in the midst of these disasters, see what is happening! The nations are awakening; they rub their eyes; for their morning meal these famished creatures demand liberty and peace; liberty, I tell you, and above all the peace and the justice whereof their fathers never knew or tasted the savour. And I, I call to them: "Ask, above all, for faith!" Without faith, the rest is tasteless and turns to poison. But faith, where is it? Where shall we find its source again? The clergy reck naught of it. . . . The cardinals rend it. . . . The Pope. . . ah, the Pope! . . . I will not tell you what he is, you know too well! If we do not take care, there will issue from our unhappy Church overgrown with brambles, from our rotting doctrines,

from our decaying disciplines, the hideous heads of heresies, hissing from the tips of their forked tongues the excuses, the pretexts furnished them by these abominable doctrines, and turning them to venom. Do you mark them, these monsters seeking their quarry throughout the kingdoms of Christendom? And they have only too powerful an aid in those other vipers, the scholars, drunk with the pride of having learnt to read in the new-found books of Greece and Rome. Do you not hear what counsellors they offer us, to take the place of the great doctors of theology? Plato, Seneca, the wretched Martial, the obscene Ovid, the impure Anacreon, a Lucan, a Petronius, a Statius, a Bion, an Apuleius, a Catullus. Every day you may see old greybeards, mad as the foolishest of youths, uttering these cries with a shameful enthusiasm and putting forward a page of Cicero as preferable to the holiest verses of our Gospels! Are these dangerous attacks enough, threats enough for the balance of men's consciences? No! The brush comes to join the pen, and with the brush the chisel and the engraver's tool, to reveal the new world to the eyes of a crowd amazed with infamous novelties. Yes, I say, all the senses of mind and heart are set in motion, stirred up, tickled by Satan; and if we must defend ourselves, it is high time to think of defence. Have you never heard tell of what they call "love of art"—which is really nothing but the shameful appetite for vice? This abomination has crept into our Churches, which have thus become, what?—synagogues of the Devil! A Magdalen, a Sebastian, are only pretexts for unveiling the human form as shamelessly as Apollo and Venus. And I, I, who see and touch and feel and understand the horror of these degradations, I whose soul rises to furious disgust, yes, to the holy rage of indignation for the Cross, do you expect me to let these foulnesses heap their filth upon hapless humanity, without setting my life as a barrier against such an invasion? No! a thousand times no! I shall not remain inactive before such a levy of the forces of the arch-fiend! I shall defend the world! I shall defend the age in

which I live! I shall forge the weapons of the future and try to put them in its hand! The century that is opening will march on, regenerated, towards the endless waves of eternity, engulfing for ever the unsightly ruins of evil and of its debaucheries!

THE PRIOR: Then, to repeat it all in cool and sober language, you declare war against all the powers of the earth? War against the will of the Church, war against the manners of princes, war against the weakness, the indifference, the caprice of all? That is what you intend to do?

FRA GIROLAMO: I intend to do it, I will do it! If it means death to me, why not? . . . Are my bones worth sparing? . . . But if I succeed, and if, even when I am execrated, disgraced, crushed, dead, Italy, our Italy owes me a shining faith, a valiant freedom, a joyful virtue, what ground will you have for pity?

THE PRIOR: None. Where do you begin your preaching? At Venice?

FRA GIROLAMO: Venice is gagged by worldly wisdom. She will be the last to come to our side.

THE PRIOR: At Rome?

FRA GIROLAMO: Rome is the pillar of salvation submerged in a sea of pestilence. But at Florence men can act. The death of Lorenzo de' Medici leaves me a free field; he would have prevented everything, for he was a pagan; but the authority of his son Piero is sapped at its roots. The masses and the nobles have suffered; they know at least how to talk of equity and morals, they have some idea of independence . . . they *think*, and although they are not worth much, still with them it is possible to attempt reform. Besides, at Florence the people loves me, it listens to me—I am expected.

THE PRIOR: Go then, brother; you have my blessing. . . . Embrace me, both of you. You are about to put into action that which I sometimes dreamed, in days gone by, in my youth, and which seems to me very difficult. . . . Perhaps you are right. . . . I feel a deep sadness come over me.

FRA GIROLAMO: I am filled with a boundless hope. You follow me, then, Fra Silvestre?

FRA SILVESTRE: In death as in life. I will never leave your side.

FRA GIROLAMO: Come then! Open the door. How the countryside widens out before our gaze! It is the image of the task we are about to undertake. Do you not see anyone on that white road where our steps will take us? It is all lit up by the rays of the moon, and stretches far in the direction of Florence.

FRA SILVESTRE: No, Girolamo, I see no one!

FRA GIROLAMO: Well, as for me, I clearly discern the features of two great faces!

FRA SILVESTRE: Where, pray, brother?

FRA GIROLAMO: There! Look again! They are Faith in God and Our Country! Forward, Fra Silvestre, forward!

After the two monks have passed the garden gate and the Prior has shut it again, two men dressed in shabby garb, their breasts uncovered, their hair curly and dishevelled, their faces mean, appear behind an embrasure of the wall.

FIRST ROBBER: Coward!

SECOND ROBBER: Fool! Do you not see that they are two?

FIRST ROBBER: Well, what of that?

SECOND ROBBER: In our trade we should always be at least two to one.

FIRST ROBBER: Bah! I should have dealt a good knife-thrust to the taller of them; as to the shorter, a blow of the fist would have been enough to make him roll like a ninepin. So there are two excellent robes of wool lost to us. It's out of the question to prosper with poltroons of your kidney!

SECOND ROBBER: Let us go and drink a dram at Ruddy-locks'; perhaps the night will bring us a better opportunity.

MILAN.
1494.

A hall in the palace.—Ludovico Sforza, regent of the Milanese, is seated before a great table covered with a cloth of red velvet worked with patterns of gold, silver and colours. He is dressed in black satin, set off with embroideries of jet, and wears at his waist a richly inlaid dagger. He toys with his glove. Around him are seated Antonio Cornazano, author of the poem on the art of war ; Giovanni Achillini, antiquary, poet, Hellenist and musician ; Gaspardo Visconti, famed for his sonnets and considered by his contemporaries the equal of Petrarch ; Bernardino Luini, painter ; Lionardo da Vinci.

LUDOVICO: Well! this time, Master Lionardo, have you come back for good?

LIONARDO: Sire, I do not deserve such severity. Your highness knows well that I am devoted to your service.

LUDOVICO: Yes, at the moment you make me the finest protestations in the world, I admit; and, weary of Florence, disgusted by the fanatical preachings of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, angered at the enthusiasm they arouse, you are ready (so you write me) to invent me cannon, pieces of artillery, machines of every kind, to build me bridges, to trace the plan of our forts, to dig canals, and finally to beautify our cities by palaces and churches, by statues and paintings. I know quite well that you are capable of doing everything; but can you also check your wayward temper? How many times have you changed your opinions and your friendships! These are not reproaches, my dear Lionardo, but frankly, you are as fickle as a froward girl.

LIONARDO (shaking his head): I cannot help smiling at the affectionate charges of Your Highness, for, say what you will, they still remain charges, and I confess that appearances are all against me. Yet no, I am not fickle! I should perhaps have spent my whole life at Florence, but there is so much to see in the world, so much to learn! If I had dwelt all the time in the same place, I should perhaps lack two-thirds of the knowledge I have gained, and nevertheless I have not reached the hundredth part of all that I wish to learn.

ANTONIO CORNAZANO: Perhaps it would be better for you, Master Lionardo, to give yourself up to a single pursuit,

rather than to follow interests so many and so diverse. For example, you are an admirable painter—why seek your glory elsewhere?

LIONARDO: You talk like Bernardino.

BERNARDINO LUINI: Ah, master, if you would only consent to finish the pictures you begin! What happiness for me, your pupil! What lessons!

LIONARDO: None the less, I could not renounce geometry or mathematics.

GASPARDO VISCONTI: You had far better increase the number of your poems and of your charming musical compositions. Fall in love only with the theorbo invented by you!

LIONARDO: I shall return to it and perfect it. Music is now in its first infancy, and will take a long time to grow up. It is not music that is the subject of interest at present.

ACHILLINI: Is it the treatise on optics?

LIONARDO: Not even that.

LUINI: Then it is anatomy. In that study at least there is material for the painter.

LIONARDO: Anatomy is a fascinating science. But I am above all troubled because they refused at Florence to adopt my plan for the canal to Pisa. The greatest advantages would have resulted from it; and if I have come here, it is because in default of this rejected scheme you will perhaps allow me to persuade you to put an end to the floods from which the peasants suffer so much along the valleys of Chiavenna and Valtelino. I have brought my plans.

LUDOVICO: Master Lionardo, to a man like you we must allow all freedom to create at his own sweet will, for he could not produce results other than admirable. But I know beforehand that a whim will seize you, and that you will leave me once more. You are admired and summoned by every prince. Lorenzo the Magnificent did all he could to retain you in the midst of the illustrious men he kept about him. He is dead, and that means one competitor the less; but the Gonfalonier

Soderini only let you go with great difficulty; Galeazzo Bentivoglio makes the most lavish offers to attract you to Bologna, and I am not unaware that the Duke of Valentinois has appointed you his chief engineer and architect. You will end by letting yourself be drawn away.

LIONARDO: I think not, sire, so long as I enjoy your bounties, for you have the greatest feeling for the arts of any prince in Italy. An admirable poet yourself, you understand the genius of poets; men are happy at your Court, they can talk with you, they are understood by you, and the largesses of your rich intellect are to me a hundred times more precious than the gilded favours of the wealthiest purses. I will remain as long as you desire.

LUDOVICO: O, my friends, how sweet and beautiful would life be if we could see it glide like a river of paradise between the verdant and fruitful banks of science and art! But you all know how different reality is from so glorious a fiction, and what must be undergone by the unfortunate men ordained by Heaven to govern the nations! I never feel a joy truly unalloyed save in the too brief moments when I am alone in your company!

LIONARDO: It is a great misfortune that, instead of being our reigning duke, you are only the temporary regent of the State. We live in an age that has need of men to lead the nations, and Lord Galeazzo, with his weak health and his scanty intelligence, is nothing but a downright child. I crave your pardon if I speak so openly, but I am only repeating before you what everyone says aloud, when you are not there, and that, too, all over the Milanese and in all Italy.

VISCONTI: That is the precise truth. What a misfortune to be governed at this moment by so great a prince, who is condemned soon to abandon us to all the hazards of inexperience and weakness!

LUDOVICO: Your words afflict me sorely, friends. I love my nephew Galeazzo; I love his wife, the Duchess Isabella, and I only seek means of serving them; albeit—I cannot hide

it from myself, it is no precious metal that went to the making of my ward. God guard us from the misfortunes which the young man's lack of ability forebodes to our house!

ANTONIO CORNAZANO: Sire, I served a long while under the noble and valorous Lord Bartolommeo Colleone, and I have seen many governments made and unmade. If I misread not the signs of the times, the Duchy has more need than ever to be defended by a manly spirit and held by a strong hand.

LUDOVICO: You see aright, Lord Antonio; I recognise in your speech the tried warrior, the dexterous statesman, no less than the scholar and the man of letters. My friends, with you I can talk freely of the great matters that engage our attention; besides, there are no longer any secrets here.

LIONARDO: You are about to reveal to us one that is very great, sire, and that alone interests me more than all others: that is, to show us the way in which noble and courageous souls perceive, represent, judge and hope to guide the destinies of empires.

LUDOVICO: Listen to me then, philosopher, since the movements of the human soul are to you so important, and look at me, painter, if you wish to gaze upon a man of resolution. You know that two years ago Pope Alexander VI. assumed the Papal tiara. He whom men called Cardinal Roderigo Borgia thus became the head of the Church. You all lower your heads with a troubled air? I can well imagine that; but I know the Pope, I know him through and through, and I will tell you this: he is a man gifted with lofty wisdom, foresight and penetration. His eloquence, when occasion demands, is as irresistible as is his art of gripping the minds of men and bending them to his purpose. As to his inflexible perseverance, it is that of a god, and by virtue of this quality, the most dangerous in an opponent, he is in almost all encounters assured of success. There is a man with whom the universe must reckon, and we all know that, when armed for war and supremacy, he knows no faith, no law, no religion,

no scruple, no mercy, and has but one interest in the world, that of the house of Borgia as represented by his children. He is a marvellous being. Up to now he has succeeded everywhere, in spite of being known for what he is. Hence all the real statesmen of the College of Cardinals, feeling themselves to be in great danger, have had recourse to the only means of safety that remained: they have taken to flight. Giuliano della Rovere stays in his episcopal city of Ostia, surrounded by fortifications and troops; Giovanni Colonna thinks himself secure only in Sicily. Giovanni de' Medici is in Florence. For my part I confess that I am as much afraid of the man as are the Cardinals themselves. I know that his son, the Duke of Valentinois, would fain destroy us and deprive us of the Milanese; I know that the family has allied itself to the Aragonese, my enemies; I know that Piero de' Medici is arraying his Florentines against me; I know that from Venice I can expect nothing, save to be eaten up in the event of my growing weak. In this situation, it has seemed to me profitable to determine first of all where I should look for my most formidable adversaries. There is no possibility of mistake about that—they are the Aragonese and the Florentines. They will attack me in the open field the very first day, hence it is towards them that I must look first. In doing so, I have observed, not for the first time in my life, that every condition that seems at its worst is not so bad as it looks, and that in analysing it with care we can extract a health-giving substance from the direst poison. Thus I found that Alexander VI. was, with regard to Ferdinand of Naples and the Medici, in precisely the same position as I. I accordingly sent my brother, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, to the Sovereign Pontiff, and we have formed an alliance. At the same time I approached the Venetians, who are no better disposed than he to the house of Aragon, and in this way I have been able to counterbalance the Florentines by Venice and the Aragonese by the Pope. At bottom it is but a frail and temporary scaffolding, a cardboard structure which will

topple or catch fire, and in face of this evidence and of the urgent necessity of guarding myself carefully against my allies, I have addressed the King of France. I have persuaded him, as heir of the house of Anjou, to claim Naples. He has added the plan of dethroning Alexander and declaring him unworthy of the tiara—a plan which leads me to hope that for the moment, at any rate, he will not come to an understanding with the Pope. Charles VIII. has crossed the mountains, he is marching on Florence; later on we shall have to think how to send him back; but for the present consider, and tell me if my nephew Galeazzo is the man to understand and guide aright combinations so delicate and yet so necessary.

LIONARDO: Assuredly not! But the mind of one such as you, sire, what a powerful creation of the most holy profundity of the mind of God!

VISCONTI: It is as certain that Duke Ludovico is made for the crown as that the crown will come of its own accord to place itself on his head.

A GENTLEMAN-IN-WAITING: Sire, I have come from Rome at full gallop. I had orders not to delay for one instant. Here is the dispatch which my most reverend lord, the Cardinal Ascanio, commands me to deliver to you.

LUDOVICO: Give it me. Let us see what my brother writes.

He goes to a window, reads the dispatch, and comes back smiling.

Since you are so fond of learning things, Master Lionardo, listen to this: My ally, the Holy Father, has come to an understanding with the Aragonese. The hand of Doña Sancia of Aragon, who is seventeen, is given to his son, Goffredo Borgia, who is thirteen. Alexander is satisfied, as indeed he should be.

LIONARDO: That confounds your plans, sire.

LUDOVICO: Not in the least. I had played my pawn before the Pope touched his. The French are marching on

Florence, I tell you, and we must all get into the saddle at once, as we are, to go to Chiara before the King. I will leave you and go and ask Madam Beatrice, my wife, to make haste, she and the fair ladies whom we are taking. The French love this kind of meeting and the games that follow. Go, my lords, put on your richest habits, you will take my horses and I will present you to Charles VIII.

ACHILLINI: We shall be greatly honoured.

FLORENCE.

The court of Luigi de' Buonarotti's little house. A roof of beams in a corner, under which Michael Angelo is working at a statue of Hercules twenty-four feet high. On an upturned wash-tub is seated Luigi, his father, his arms crossed and his face troubled.

LUIGI: You are now twenty-two; by my reckoning you should bear yourself at that age like a man. But you are and always will be nothing but a child, useless to yourself and to others.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I work as much as I can and deserve no hard words.

LUIGI: Since the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, what I had foreseen has come about. You earn nothing. . . . Heavens! Are you crying again?

MICHAEL ANGELO (wiping his eyes): I cannot think without sorrow of my benefactor, to whom I owe so much.

LUIGI: If that man had not made your head swell, you would have obeyed me and would be better off. Instead of enrolling yourself among those idle artist fellows and disgracing yourself, yourself and the honour of your family, by following the stonemason's trade, you would now be in the silk business, and I should not see you always covered with plaster and your hands in the mud.

MICHAEL ANGELO: When my deceased master had the kindness to admit me to the sculptor's workshop in his gardens of San Marco with Francesco Granacci, he allowed me five

ducats a month, and he always paid handsomely for what I did. What is more, it is out of consideration for me that you have obtained that post in the Customs which gives bread to you and all the family.

LUIGI: Besides, your comrade Torrigiani, in his frenzy at seeing you too clever, bruised your face all over, you forget *that*. That is the glorious advantage you have gained from Lorenzo the Magnificent! I'm sorry for you.

MICHAEL ANGELO: For good or evil, I am what I am. You don't intend to put me to-day into apprenticeship with a weaver?

LUIGI: Well, that would be the best thing to do. It's plain that the Medici will not order any more pictures or statues from you. Duke Piero is not like his predecessor, and what will become of you?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Duke Piero does not treat me badly. Only yesterday evening he asked my advice about an antique cornelian which has been offered him for sale.

LUIGI: And he has even made you fashion a statue of snow. A noble task! Honourable, forsooth! The man uses you as one uses a buffoon. The first fine day he'll abandon you to the spite of those daubers of canvas in the midst of whom you have chosen to live. I tell you once more that I do not approve of your great friendship with that Francesco Granacci; he is a scamp. I am still more annoyed at your frequenting the company of young Niccolo Machiavelli. It is true, he is of good birth, I don't deny it, but they say he has no morals, and he has got married to Marietta at an age when he ought to think of nothing but making his way. He only busies himself with the ancient Romans! Then, too, he is without means, and very soon he'll want to borrow money from you, if he has not done so already. Has he tried yet?

MICHAEL ANGELO: You know that I give you all that I earn.

LUIGI: Can I guess what you put aside? But we'll leave

that vexed question. I don't like Machiavelli; I think he is conspiring against the government of Duke Piero. . . . Not that I trouble much about the Medici. They are always on the point of being driven out, and decidedly we are sick of them. I am quite aware also that worthy Fra Girolamo favours government by the people, and God forbid that I should oppose Fra Girolamo's views! But I do not care for a man's meddling with affairs of State when he's a misbegotten creature like that Machiavelli. What do you and he do together? What do you talk about? He will draw you into some piece of foolishness. Just tell me what plots you hatch when you go out together.

Michael Angelo lays his tools on the seat and sits on the bench, his head in his hands.

What is the matter with you? Are you ill?

MICHAEL ANGELO: I have a bad headache.

LUIGI: It's idleness that makes you ill. If you worked at something useful you would feel well.

Enter Niccolò Machiavelli

MACHIAVELLI: Messer Ludovico, I greet you in all humility. Good morning, Michael Angelo.

LUIGI: I am busy, I have to go out, sir—and as for you, Michael Angelo, remember that you are working there at a task that admits of no slackening, and that you have no time to chat. God guard you, Messer Niccolò.

Exit.

MACHIAVELLI: Ah! my friend, I have come to tell you quickly what it is that fills my soul with joy. The French will be here in a few hours.

MICHAEL ANGELO: As friends? As enemies?

MACHIAVELLI: Nothing is known. Negotiations are being carried on; if friendship cannot be established, we shall resist like men and defend our country. But there's more to come! Piero de' Medici commits nothing but follies. Fra Girolamo has come over to our way of thinking, and is joining the popular party, so that the coming of the French will cause the fall of that haughty house whose pride stifles our liberties.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I owe everything to the father, and will not be reckoned among the foes of the children.

MACHIAVELLI: You have a heart; but remember that the interests of your country come before your own. All is in ferment; the water is hot, burning, boiling. The whole people is working itself into a frenzy. Ah, Michael Angelo! what a glorious moment! I am going to see liberty, settled order, wise government elsewhere than in the dead pages of old books and in the abstractions of my dreams! Every man worthy of the name in Florence is on our side: Soderini, Valori, Vespuccio, Marsilio Ficino, the scholars, the artists, all devotees of high thinking, all well-wishers towards mankind!

MICHAEL ANGELO: I am not on your side. I will have none of you. The Medici are my patrons, and it is not to my liking that Fra Girolamo, instead of continuing to preach virtue to us as of old, meddles with politics.

MACHIAVELLI: His meddling is to a good purpose, and when we can act, we must. Action alone is worthy of a man.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Come into my room. I have to dress and pack up my things.

MACHIAVELLI: Where are you going, then?

MICHAEL ANGELO: To Bologna, to see Duke Galeazzo Bentivoglio; and if I am not well received at Bologna, I shall go to Venice. I shall not remain in the midst of this turmoil; one cannot work in it; besides, I have other reasons. It is impossible for me any longer to endure. . . Well, come! You shall lead me up to the town gate.

MACHIAVELLI: Before that I'll prove to you that you are wrong. Listen!

MICHAEL ANGELO: Talk as much as you like; my mind is made up.

He goes back into the house.

PIACENZA.

A palace serving as residence to King Charles VIII. An ante-chamber. Two French captains.

FIRST CAPTAIN: Is it you, comrade? Ah, let me embrace you!

SECOND CAPTAIN: You are welcome. How well you look! Egad, what health!

FIRST CAPTAIN: Ay, on my honour, we lead a fine life! Where do you hail from?

SECOND CAPTAIN: Straight from Lyons. I bring you twenty-five lancers fully-armed. It cost me dear to raise them! Picked men all!

FIRST CAPTAIN: You will find a hundred and one opportunities of recouping yourself. Do you know that all is going wonderfully well?

SECOND CAPTAIN: Tell me something of your fortunes.

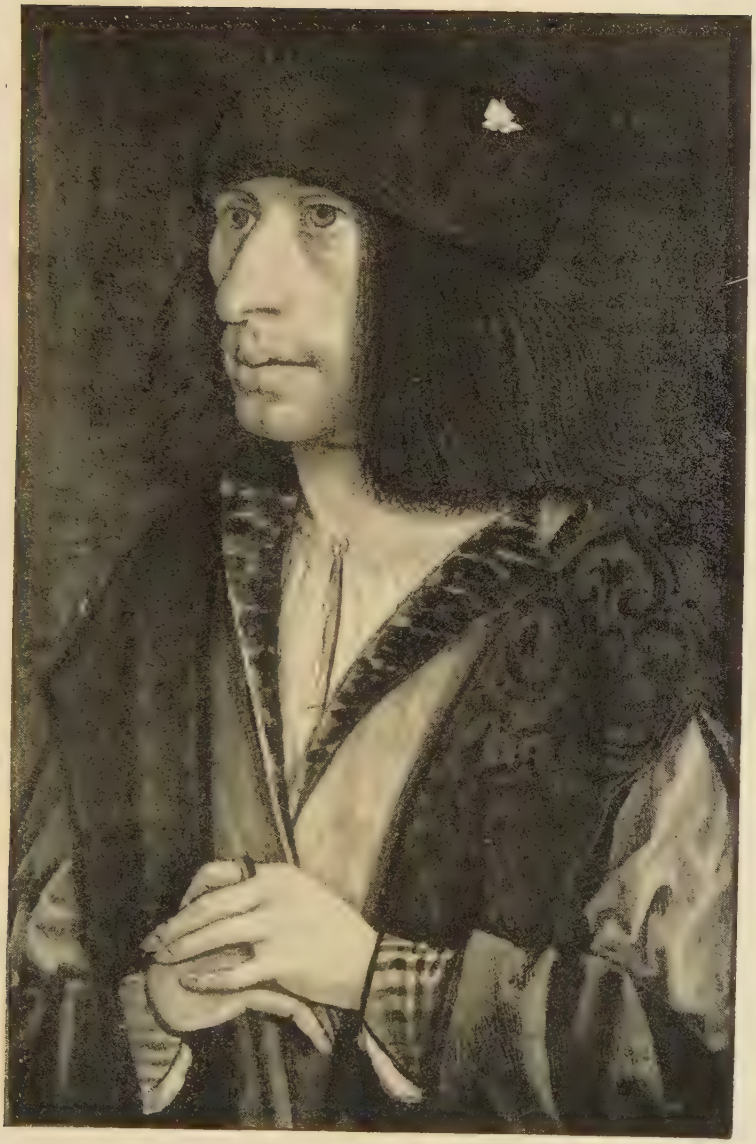
FIRST CAPTAIN: You haven't heard? Everything is going splendidly! At Turin we were received with open arms; and there, after a deal of festivities, we borrowed the diamonds and jewellery of the Duchess Bianca. She frowned a trifle at first, but we pawned the lot.

SECOND CAPTAIN: What fun you must have had.

FIRST CAPTAIN: There's twelve hundred good ducats earned. At Casale, the Marchioness of Montferrat gave us a ball—silly creature! and also showed us her jewels. The same as at Turin: we had a raffle.

SECOND CAPTAIN: So this country is a real paradise and a promised land?

FIRST CAPTAIN: My oath upon it! What is more, we are well-established at Genoa, and the Milanese troops give us a helping hand. The Swiss, it is true, have sacked the city of Rapallo, inconsiderately, perhaps; they might have plundered less completely and avoided killing everyone; but, in general, the result has been good. The Duke d'Aubigny apprises us from the Romagna that the Neapolitans are showing the white feather and retreating before him. When we have reached



KING CHARLES VIII. OF FRANCE

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Asti, Duke Galeazzo's uncle came to meet us with his sister Beatrice, and I'll whisper in your ear that he presented to the King a number of Milanese ladies who, on my honour, have given us most excellent entertainment.

SECOND CAPTAIN: You make my mouth water. A pity that I did not come sooner!

FIRST CAPTAIN: There'll be no lack of chances. Hush! here is the King.

Enter Charles VIII., small, feeble, but haughty of expression; he is pale and worn in consequence of the illness caught a few days before at Asti, from which he nearly died. In his retinue, several officers, Philip de Commines, Lord d'Argenton; Lords de Bonneval, de Châtillon, both great favourites of the King; the physician Teodoro of Pavia.

THE KING: You say, Teodoro, that Galeazzo has just died, and that the cause of this sudden death is not clear.

TEODORO: On the contrary, sire, I fear it is only too clear. There was poison.

THE KING: Ludovico the Moor* goes too far. What has he done with the Duchess Isabella and his nephew's children?

TEODORO: They are locked up in a dark and somewhat unhealthy chamber.

THE KING: I am sorry for that—but I have other matters to think of. This Ludovico would be capable of poisoning me myself, in spite of his fine show of friendship. M. D'Urfé writes that to me. I do not know why I remain in Italy. I am advised to return home, and perhaps that were my best course. This country holds nothing but traitors.

DE BONNIVAL: Still, there are the Medici, especially Cardinal Giovanni, strongly urging us not to desert their cause.

DE COMMINES: It is only natural that those Medici should have little scruple about making the King fish in troubled waters; they are bent on returning to their city and taking vengeance.

DE CHÂTILLON: Those Florentines! Lunatics, counselled

* 'The Moor,' a name given to Ludovico Sforza on account of his swarthy countenance.

by a monk named Girolamo. A strange fellow! And their prince, a coward, a man of straw, brow-beaten and gagged by Gino Capponi and all the enemies of his house, before whom he can only tremble! I cannot hear his name even without feeling a desire to spit on him. (Laughter.) He is incapable of recognising the benefits showered on him by your Royal house!

THE KING: I have been told that my ancestor Charlemagne and his twelve peers built Florence; is it true?

DE COMMINES: If they did not exactly build it, at any rate they helped it to emerge from its ruins.

THE KING: Then the Florentines are my subjects; they are rebels; my knightly vow compels me to chastise them, and I shall carry it out with a vengeance.

DE COMMINES: It would be more politic to guide these people to better sentiments than to estrange them from us. Since your Majesty has decided to go to Naples by way of Tuscany, we must keep the road behind us open.

DE BONNEVAL: The Lord d'Argenton always seems to think that we might be defeated.

THE KING: It is true. You have not a generous spirit, my Lord—you are like my father.

DE COMMINES: He was a great prince, and exceedingly shrewd.

DE CHÂTILLON (very loud): The King has not invaded Italy to play the pedant, but rather to display to the world his valour, and astonish it by mighty feats of arms.

THE KING: I need no other models than the famous Gawain, Lancelot and Rinaldo, who performed such noble exploits. With God to aid me, I hope to do likewise!

DE CHÂTILLON: That's the way to talk! What is the use of being a valiant knight and redoubtable conqueror if one stops to reflect, to weigh, to balance, in a word, to play the fox? 'Zounds, we shall go everywhere, everywhere! On our heads and our bellies! With great sword-strokes, with mighty

lance-thrusts! Without that, it had not been worth while to come so far!

BONNEVAL: Blows, battles, amours, feasts and triumphs! If there is anything else, I shall go back.

THE KING (smiling): They are right! I feel the same! Go to bed, Lord Philip; you are old, your heart has lost its glow.

ROME.

The chamber of Pope Alexander VI.—The Pope, Giorgio Bosardi; Burchard, master of the ceremonies.

THE POPE: Master Burchard, my friend, stay a while behind the door and see that no one comes to interrupt us. I have to speak to that lad there.

BURCHARD: Yes, Most Holy Father.

He passes behind the door.

THE POPE: Now, Giorgio, ass that you are, pay me all attention and try to understand. You are going to start to-day for Constantinople, and you will make all possible speed.

BOSARDI: Yes, Holy Father.

THE POPE: Listen to me carefully. You will only speak to the Grand Vizier himself, in the strictest secrecy—you understand?

BOSARDI: Yes, Holy Father. I comprehend the intention of Your Holiness. It is only in the strictest secrecy that I shall speak—and then cautiously—with the Grand Vizier.

THE POPE: And you will only be quite explicit with the Sultan Bajazet in person.

BOSARDI: That was my idea, Holy Father.

THE POPE: Don't imagine yourself too knowing. I am quite aware that you are merely a fool, but in certain circumstances one does not know whom to trust, and you can never count for certain upon clever men.

BOSARDI: Yes, Holy Father.

THE POPE: You will say to the Grand Vizier, if you cannot

speak first to the Sultan, that I send him my sincerest compliments and give him my apostolic benediction.

BOSARDI: Yes, Holy Father.

THE POPE: You will add that I do not forget for a single day, for a single minute, his affection for me, that I repay it to him with interest, and you will deliver to him from me this charming Madonna of Giovanni Bellini for which he has asked me through his master's ambassador at Venice.

BOSARDI: I shall not fail to do so, Holy Father. The Madonna has already been taken to Ostia, and put on board my galley, and I shall address the Sultan Bajazet and his minister in the words best suited to convince them of the most friendly sentiments of your Holiness towards their persons.

THE POPE: Then, coming to essentials, you will begin by reminding them how surprised I am, and with good reason, at not receiving the two quarters already due of that annuity of forty thousand ducats, granted to Pope Innocent VIII. from 1489; and you will not omit to insist on the fact that I deserve it quite as much as my predecessor, since I watch no less carefully over Prince Zizimi, brother to the Sultan, and do not let him pass out of my guardianship.

BOSARDI: Your Holiness may rest quite assured. I shall make him renew payment of the annuity.

THE POPE: This settled, you will describe the frenzied ambition of the King of France. You will explain that his main idea in seizing the kingdom of Naples is to proceed to the attack of Constantinople, in order to gain the crown of the Byzantine emperors. He is not yet at Florence at the present moment, he wishes to come to my territory so as to fight the Aragonese; nevertheless, he already hides none of his ambitious aims, which threaten the security of the Ottoman throne. He has told me of his projects, he has told the Venetians, the Duke of Milan, they are no secrets; but what he confided to me in particular, and what I am revealing to Bajazet, is his wish to take away the Prince Zizimi from me, so that he can use him at the proper time and place against the

POPE ALEXANDER VI.

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Sultan. Bajazet is bound to be terrified at such an idea—you will point out to him the serious consequences. So far as I am concerned, I shall not yield to Charles VIII.'s importunities; I shall not deliver Zizimi to the King of France, so long as it is possible for me to resist; and if finally, being no longer the more powerful, I am obliged to let my prisoner go, I shall arrange to hand him over under such conditions that the Sultan need feel no anxiety about him. You can promise him that from me. But it is an understood thing that Bajazet must merit so great a service. You will put these confidences in a way that will not be compromising.

BOSARDI: It is not difficult to show the connection and the bearing of events without saying a single word about them.

THE POPE: As to the good offices which I expect from my ally they are—to help me to drive the barbarians from Italy; and for this purpose it would be useful to have at my disposal, either in the Romagna or in Apulia, a good Turkish army. This would ensure our gaining the upper hand of the French, which would be advantageous to the Sultan as well as to me. That is your mission—do you understand it all?

BOSARDI: Yes, Holy Father—the annuity of forty thousand ducats, and Turkish troops in Italy.

THE POPE: Go, make all speed! Send me good news promptly. . . . Burchard! Ho, Burchard!

BURCHARD: Most Holy Father?

THE POPE: Conduct this gentleman to the Holy Signatory and have his letters of credit delivered to him as well as the private letter which I am addressing to the Sultan. Ah! if I could stop these French bandits before they reach Rome!

Enter a chamberlain

CHAMBERLAIN: An envoy of the Duke of Milan waits without, Holy Father.

THE POPE: Who is it? Ah! good! it's the little man! . . . The confidant! . . . Come in, my friend. How does my Lord Ludovico? So his nephew Galeazzo has died in his arms of a sudden illness, and the aforesaid Galeazzo's little son, also?

THE ENVOY: Yes, Most Holy Father.

THE POPE: Your master is subject to such misfortunes. What says he?

THE ENVOY: He says that Your Holiness is not keeping your word in the affair of Fra Girolamo. You humour this fanatic, and his preachings go on all the time. Not to mention that the Florentines would be more amenable and would desert the French cause with all their heart, if this monk were not turning their heads; the North of Italy is all topsy-turvy. The princes are very discontented; the clergy is still more so; they are going to lose their domains; Savonarola talks of nothing less than of handing over to the sick the ecclesiastical estate and even the sacred vessels.

THE POPE: I find the Duke of Milan's solicitude for Holy Church rather amusing. I shall not trouble about Savonarola so long as I have heavier burdens on my hands. Why has your master, in spite of his promises, not already broken with the French? Is he jesting? If the Venetians have taken no action, they are at least making preparations and have given us pledges. Are the Neapolitans and ourselves likely to await your good pleasure indefinitely? The Florentines and your master are the only parties left who will not come to a decision. When will it all end?

THE ENVOY: A Roland for an Oliver! Act with sincerity as regards Savonarola and we will consider your interests. That is your message from the Grand Duke.

THE POPE: Go and chat about all this with Don Cesare, and I will see what can be done.

———

NEAR FLORENCE.

A road in a hollow near the French camp. A peasant's house burning; the owner is lying on the ground, weeping; on a stone are seated Jean de Bonneau, archer of M. de Terride's company, and Jacques Lamy, another archer, engaged in eating bread and onions on their thumbs; from time to time they take a draught of wine from their gourds.

LAMY (to the peasant): How old was your wife?

PEASANT (weeping): Nearly twenty-two.

DE BONNEAU: Was she pretty? Come! don't groan! You're like a calf. The long and the short of it is, they have killed her. What of it?

PEASANT (wringing his hands): Ah, my God! my God!

LAMY: We are rough fellows, we Gascons. Eat a bit. . . . Here!

PEASANT: No! . . . no! Ah, my God!

LAMY: Don't you see, my good man, that what's done is done! . . . That's war. The soldier, too, must have his fun.

PEASANT: My wife! . . . My poor wife! . . .

LAMY: It would be better if you set about putting out the fire of your hovel. . . . Everything will be burnt!

PEASANT: It's all one to me.

DE BONNEAU: He's a savage. Well, good-day. Console yourself. Are you coming, Jacques?

LAMY (to the peasant): Here, my lad, I leave you the rest of the bread and two onions. . . . When your heart bids you, eat! There's no doubt he is a savage.

The peasant sobs; the soldiers go off singing at the top of their voices:—

Châtillon, Bourdillon, Bonneval
Hold the Royal house in thrall.

FLORENCE.

In front of the Medici Palace.—The square is filled with people. Sudden cries, shouts, roars and clamours. At the doors of the palace are drawn up bands of French and Swiss cross-bowmen, musketeers and pikemen ; two companies in battle array ; bodies of artillery come up through the crowd and take up their position in front. At the windows, numbers of French captains and officers, their casques on their heads.

A PORTER (shaking his fist at the French): Oh, the ruffians!

A BUTCHER: Cursed thieves! See if I don't slit their bellies, all of them, with my cleaver!

A CITIZEN (mounted on a boundary-stone): Citizens, friends, don't believe a word of what they tell you of these wretches from across the mountains! They, our friends! Friends, indeed! They have taken Sarzana by storm and burnt it; they have massacred men, women and children! Dreadful sights have been seen!

CRIES IN THE SQUARE: Down with the French!

CITIZEN (gesticulating): We have driven out Piero de' Medici! He has gone to join his scoundrelly brothers, the Cardinal and the other one! And these foreigners want to bring them back! Is he not a coward? Is he not a traitor? We have dragged his scutcheons in the mire, and now we are to restore them? We have razed his palace to the ground and now we are to build it up again? It's a scandal!

VIOLENT SHOUTS: Death to the Medici! Death to the French!

A YOUTH (leaping on another boundary-stone): Yes, death to them all! They are fiends! They are barbarians! After they made Pisa revolt from us and threatened us with a siege, we admitted them to our city! We have suffered Charles VIII. to make his entry under a daïs like the Host! We have let them march through the streets in battle array, with lance on thigh like conquerors! We have given them flatteries, compliments, embraces! We have played them the Annunciation of the most Holy Virgin in the Church of Santa Felice, and that twice over because they asked us to, and now they want to enslave us!

THE CROWD: No! No! No! Death to the French! Give us cudgels and swords!

Great agitation; the people begin to arm themselves.

CAPTAIN TERRIDE (to his Lieutenant): Remain at the head of the company and bid the men lower their visors. . . . I am going up there to relate what is happening.

LIEUTENANT: My Lord, one good charge at that crowd, eh?

CAPTAIN TERRIDE: Yes; but wait for the order. No rash measures!

He gets down from his horse and goes into the palace.

A hall in the Medici Palace. The King, Philip of Savoy, Count de Bresse, M. de Piennes, M. de Bourdillon, M. d'Argenton; officers in great number; Messer Gino Capponi and three Florentine commissaries.

THE KING (stamping his foot): I am master here! I demand obedience!

CAPPONI: Your Majesty will have the goodness to tell us once more what you claim, and we shall report to the Signiory.

THE KING: So be it! Give me all your attention; I shall not repeat my words a third time, and if you are fractious, you shall smart for it.

DE PIENNES: Well spoken!

THE KING: I wish you to take back your prince, Messer Piero de' Medici.

Applause from the French.

CAPPONI: I am listening.

THE KING: Will you take him back?

CAPPONI: I am listening, and when we know what the point at issue is, we shall answer.

THE KING: You do not appear resolved to submit.

CAPPONI: You will see that by results. For the moment, we are listening to Your Majesty, so that we may know what your wishes are.

THE KING: I say, then, that I desire first of all that Messer

Piero be restored; secondly, that all the Signiory be henceforth of my choosing.

CAPPONI: That is what you wish?

THE KING: Yes, I wish that.

CAPPONI: Well, as for us, we do not wish it.

THE KING: You do not?

CAPPONI: No, we do not.

THE KING: Body of Christ! You are bold indeed!

CAPPONI: At this moment we must be bold.

THE KING (to one of his officers): Give me the treaty which these men are about to sign immediately. Here, gentlemen, sit down at these tables; here is ink, here are pens, don't be obstreperous, my patience is near an end. Sign, sign, sign!

CAPPONI (snatching the treaty from its bearer's hands, tears it in two): That is how the Florentines behave towards tyrants!

THE KING (beside himself): Let the trumpets blow!

CAPPONI: And we'll set the bells ringing!

Exit with his colleagues.

CAPTAIN TERRIDE (rushes into the room): Orders, sire! The crowd in the square is enormous, we are going to be attacked! Your Swiss troops wanted to seize the Borgo d'Ogni Santi, they were roughly handled and repulsed. What are your commands?

THE KING: Call back Messer Capponi as quickly as possible.

The King walks in agitation up and down the room; M. de Bourdillon comes and whispers to him; silence; cries and shouts are heard from the mob in the square.

Enter the Florentine deputies.

THE KING (taking Capponi's hand): Oh Capon, wicked Capon, you are playing us a scurvy trick here!

CAPPONI: I am Your Majesty's servant, and ready to serve you in all that is reasonable.

THE KING: My servant!

CAPPONI: The most loyal of servants.

THE KING: Very well, seeing that you refuse my offers, which were all for your good, make a proposal yourself.

CAPPONI: You are a great king, you have a knightly and generous spirit, we ask you to add to the glorious titles of your predecessors the no less splendid title of restorer and protector of Florentine liberties.

THE KING: I am willing.

CAPPONI: We offer you, as token of our gratitude, a gratuity of a hundred and twenty thousand golden florins.

THE KING: I accept; and what then?

CAPPONI: What then? Your magnanimity will restore us our fortresses; you will give us back Pisa, and it will be settled that Piero de' Medici shall not come within two hundred miles of our walls.

THE KING: So be it! Now that we are good friends, I will stay with you.

CAPPONI: No, sire. A Republic cannot without anxiety see so many foreign troops in its midst. Your Majesty will depart with your troops and leave us in our independence.

THE KING: Upon my life, Messer Piero, you adopt a strange tone! Am I a lackey, to be dismissed like this? Do you think me the basest of poltroons? You take too great advantage of my clemency! I have a sword at my side, I will draw it if I am given cause for anger. No, assuredly I shall not go! By the body of Christ, I shall stay as long as I please, do you mark me? If I have to stay in your buildings when they are ground to dust by my cannon! Oh, you fancied—— Who is this monk?

Enter Savonarola.

CAPPONI: Sire, this is Fra Girolamo.

THE KING: We don't need his cassock. I know you, Brother, you are nothing but a hypocrite, a revolutionary, a madman. Out you go, or I'll——

FRA GIROLAMO: You will do nothing so long as God, my Master, shields me with His right hand. I hear that you do

not wish to go? You think once more to crush this unhappy city beneath your horses' hoofs? I tell you this——

THE KING: Put him out!

CAPPONI: Have a care, sire! Wrath and rebellion are raging in Florence. If you lay a hand on Fra Girolamo, you will lay a hand on our love of our country. Believe me, believe me! Listen to him instead of insulting him, otherwise the stones themselves will rise up against you! You do not know the meaning of a nation in frenzy!

THE KING: What would you have, monk?

SAVONAROLA: I would recall you to your true self. You have no concern with Florence; it is Naples that you require—Naples and the sea; and beyond, that Imperial Crown for which you are destined by Providence, the overthrow of the Turks, the destruction of the infidel and the proud name of Supreme Head, not of petty Florence, but of all Christendom! Risk not, risk not, sire, for a paltry fit of wrath, the loss of the rank which God reserves for you, and the glorious treasures which He heaps on your head! Go where your unparalleled destiny calls you! Rob not of its liberties a poor little country that loves you; do not, like David, take away a poor man's ewe lamb, when flocks, vast and splendid, fall to your share! Beware of that! It is you who, with an all-powerful hand, must reform the Church as a whole! Leave petty affairs, busy yourself with great matters, and do not act so that you become one day a Saul, the spurned of God!

THE KING: This man speaks as if he were certain of what he is saying. Are you sure, shall I be Emperor of the East?

SAVONAROLA: Who was it that four years ago foretold that you would descend upon us and be irresistible? Who revealed the fall of the Aragonese and your entry into Rome?

THE KING: Yes, I shall enter Rome; you speak true.

SAVONAROLA: Go, then, sire, and lose no time.

Enter an officer

OFFICER: If the Florentine magistrates do not intervene

at once, we shall be shut up in this palace. The streets are filled with armed citizens, mad with evil passion.

CAPPONI (to his colleagues): With the King's order, let us come and prevent a terrible disaster.

DE BOURDILLON: Sire, I think we shall have to yield; we really have no place in this town. We shall take our revenge later on.

THE KING: You think so?

SAVONAROLA (at the King's ear): Beware, sire, the heavenly troops of angels are coming down against you from on high!

THE KING (to Capponi): Will you hold to your terms?

CAPPONI: The money shall be paid to you this instant.

THE KING (to his retinue): To horse, gentlemen! Our love of Florence is distracting us from our affairs. This very evening we shall be on the road to Naples. M. de Piennes, you will command the vanguard, and the skirmishers must leave immediately.

FLORENTINES: Long live the King!

A gate of the city.—Assemblage of the people.

A CITIZEN: At last, we see no more than the tail-end of their stragglers! They have gone, those accursèd French! May the devil keep them to himself! If it be not Fra Girolamo who delivers us from them, who is it, pray?

A TAILOR: He spoke up stoutly to the King and gave him a piece of his mind.

A LOCKSMITH: He said it all to him just as I say "good-morning" to you, and the poor devil was mortally afraid.

A MASON: Fra Girolamo is a prophet of God!

THE CROWD: If anyone doubts it, we'll rip his guts out! Kill him, kill the villainous hound! Long live Girolamo! Long live the prophet of God!

Near the Venetian frontier.—A camp of six thousand Venetian adventurers. A wide plain, fertile, covered with trees, vines and wheat; on the horizon, villages; a river flows through the midst, and the soldiers' tents line its banks. On the slope of the river-bank, a wooden booth, with green festoons, where drinks are sold. Orderlies pass, leading their horses to the drinking-trough; men-at-arms, archers, cross-bowmen, halberdiers, pikesmen, peasant men and women, courtesans, beggars; some walking, others quarrelling; many are seated before the tavern, chatting, laughing, playing at dice and cards.

A MAN-AT-ARMS: Hurrah for love! I am leaving the company of Alessandro del Tiaro, and entering the service of Il Scariotto. To the devil with my first captain, the skinflint! You die of hunger in his troop!

A CROSS-BOWMAN: I know him! I have served under him! The brute has nothing but rough words for the soldier!

A TRUMPETER: True. Now, Battista di Valmontone—there's an honest condottiere!

A PEASANT (cap in hand): Most noble signors, I am a poor man.

A PIKESMAN: It would be better if you were rich and could wager two good ducats with me on the throw of the dice.

PEASANT: Pardon me, most noble signor pikesman, I swear it to you by the Madonna and the Child! I am a very poor man, reduced to the most woful pitch of distress, and I have also just lost my last cow, which two honourable light horsemen have carried off from me.

A DRUMMER: I know that man's face. He wanders about all the camps—he has always lost his last cow; it's his profession.

MAN-AT-ARMS: How much do you earn at this, taking one year with another?

The peasant goes off, putting on his cap again.

A CROSS-BOWMAN: They say that the soldier robs the native; I tell you that in the long run, with their inns and their damaged wares, their gaming-houses and brothels, their everlasting pleas and claims, it's the natives who strip the poor soldier of his last shirt and make him die on the straw.

A TRUMPETER: My word, you're right! But who is this

coming to us all in velvet, silk and lace, a feather in his cap, his nose in the air, his hand on his hip, stiff as a poker? Egad, what a roystering blade! And it has only three fair hairs on its lip and is no more than eighteen!

NEWCOMER: Noble warriors, I salute you and am burning with desire to make your acquaintance.

MAN-AT-ARMS: We shall willingly make yours when you have told us where you come from.

NEWCOMER: I have nothing to conceal. I am an Ordelaffe of Forlì, cousin of Signor Antonio, and, in consequence, a gentleman, which most of you are very far from being. As a lover of glory, consumed with the loftiest ambitions, I come to enrol myself in my kinsman's troops, and I request your friendship in exchange for mine.

CROSS-BOWMAN: If I had a fine enough coat to my back I should turn merchant or priest; but from mere lightness of heart, I certainly should not think of wedding the halberd, hunger, thirst, cold, heat and sleepless nights.

NEWCOMER: My good friend, you were no doubt begotten by some rustic clod, and the baseness of your aspirations is quite natural. As for me, I feel myself to be of the race of falcons; I love the open air, noise, shouting; neither rain nor storm frighten me, and if the Sforzas and so many others have become princes, I don't see why I should not have the same good fortune.

PIKESMAN: Pox! what a brave lad! Have you a doubloon in your pocket? A sequin? . . . A coin of any sort? Let's have a round of cards, and then I'll take you to Don Agostino, of Campo Fregoso, who's a better man than your cousin.

NEWCOMER: You're jesting, you old dog! I have fifty German florins in my pocket. Three rounds of basset, eh?

DRUMMER: There's no doubt he's an honest fellow! Cards, cards!

A GIRL (to her companion): They are going to fleece him. It doesn't matter. Let us not lose sight of this pigeon. We will help him to-morrow to spend the price of his enlistment.

HER COMPANION: Beware of him. He has a wicked eye and a deft hand. His knife doesn't stick very fast to its sheath, I'll warrant.

On the border of the camp, in the midst of a fine garden full of flowers and planted with cypresses, a little palace built in the latest style, with foliage, arcades, double rows of columns, statues, a flat roof and a loggia borne on terra-cotta figures of satyrs.—A hall elegantly painted and furnished, coffers inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, ebony cupboards with statuettes, Venetian glasses, great divans.—Near one of the windows, turned so as to receive the best light, a picture set upon an easel.—Signor Deifobo dell' Anguillara, captain-general of the free-lances; Captain Don Sigismondo di Brandolino; the Neapolitan poet Cariteo.

ANGUILLARA: Now, Signor Cariteo, you who a great connoisseur, a great virtuoso in matters of art, what do you think of this picture?

CARITEO: It is by Barbarelli, if I am not mistaken!

ANGUILLARA: Good shot! It's by Giorgione, and one of his best, on my life! But I don't wish to influence you. . . . give your candid opinion!

CARITEO: It is a splendid painting!

ANGUILLARA: I am very glad you think so. This treasure has come this very moment, and they have just unpacked it.

CARITEO: Marvellous! Marvellous, I tell you! The fascination of colour could go no further! What is more, there is, as it were, a charming reflection of the manner of da Vinci. Then, to come to essentials, what originality! What sincerity! What fire! There's a man for you, that Giorgione—one of the glories of our age!

BRANDOLINO: All the same, I prefer the Florentine painters to the Venetian; their design is far more severe, and there is a masculine touch about their work that delights me.

CARITEO: Believe me, Giorgione and Bellini are divine beings! Am I allowed to observe here that my lord Deifobo did not wish the artist to go and contemplate in heaven the incomparable original of this Juno? . . . He showed her to him on earth.

ANGUILLARA (smiling): You're a tell-tale, and that's a crime which the ladies do not forgive. . . . Speaking seriously, you recognise the likeness?

CARITEO: Yes, I do, although the genius of the painter is far from equal to the unimaginable perfections of the model.

ANGUILLARA: To be sure, the model is not bad.

BRANDOLINO: Signor Deifobo is lucky in every respect.

CAPTAIN BARTOLOMMEO FALCIERA (on the threshold): May I speak to you, my Lord?

ANGUILLARA: What do you want? I am busy, captain. Still, come in. What is it?

FALCIERA: On the accusation of some wretched peasants, one of my best cavaliers has been arrested by the provosts, and rumour has it that you have ordered him to be hanged.

ANGUILLARA: I know all about it. Your cavalier shall be hanged. I am sorry on your account, but he shall be hanged.

FALCIERA: But consider, my lord, the losses you are causing me. For four years I have been shaping this man, paying all his expenses; he is a stout fellow and a skilled man-at-arms; of course I have made him advances, and he owes me not less than fifteen ducats. I shall lose them.

ANGUILLARA: It is very annoying, I admit; but I will not have the country folk ill-treated, and he who does so is hanged. This is my rule, and I shall not depart from it. That idiot of yours goes quietly roasting the right leg of a villager from the neighbourhood, and promises him as much for his left leg, if he does not hand over his money. (Laughter.) It's the greatest nonsense on earth! Are we in Germany, or France, or even at Naples? In that case it would be very different, I could wink at it out of regard for you, and what is more, it would not be worth while to take umbrage. But, devil take it! We are in Italy, and if the adventurers treat labouring men in this fashion, we shall soon be exposed to famine, and they'll fall upon us as if we were wild beasts. I dislike these evil practices—they must be

given up. We ply our trade; let us do so quietly and without molesting others who ply theirs. Your man shall be hanged.

FALCIERA: My luck is out! At our last brush with the Venetians, I had one of my dragoons down, and he died of it.

ANGUILLARA: Did the enemy take the liberty of killing him, by any chance?

FALCIERA: Ye gods, no! The lads of the other side, on the contrary, helped us to pick up our corpse: they were the troops of Captain Ercole Bentivoglio. The poor devil simply had an apoplectic stroke caused by the heat and the weight of his armour.

ANGUILLARA: It can't be helped; but console yourself, Captain Falciera. From time to time we must endure the blows of adversity, and Seneca would tell you so in finer language than I. Sit down all the same and take a glass of this light wine of Friuli, which is really not at all bad.

FALCIERA (with a sigh): To your health, noble Signor!

Enter Messer Vincenzo Quirini, Venetian senator, richly dressed in a robe of red brocade with great green and yellow stripes, a golden chain about his neck, and in his hands his biretta of black velvet trimmed with a string of big pearls; a handsome face, very swarthy, short black hair, curly black beard, earrings set with rubies.

QUIRINI (to Anguillara): What a pleasure it is to see you! God guard you, my illustrious friend! Allow me to embrace you!

ANGUILLARA (running to him and pressing him to his heart): What! is it you? Ah! Signor Vincenzo! What felicity . . . my noble, my illustrious comrade in arms!

QUIRINI: With all my heart I salute Signor Cariteo and the most excellent gentlemen whom I see. To be brief, the most serene Signiory sends me to you as envoy. We should be glad to know if you would enter our pay.

ANGUILLARA: My engagement with the Aragonese expires in a month. How much do you offer me?

QUIRINI: Twelve thousand ducats a month, ready money.

ANGUILLARA: We shall not come to terms at that figure.

I have forty thousand at this moment, and I have still better offers from Signor Sforza and from the French. Don Francesco Sanseverino came in person to convey them to me. Your position is this: if you want me, pay what I demand; if you do not, I shall go elsewhere. Meanwhile, pray be seated.
QUIRINI: What a charming picture! . . . Juno embracing Jupiter. . . . Admirable! . . . A Giorgione, plainly! He alone is capable of such a masterpiece. But, wait a minute. . . . I fancy it is the portrait of . . . Congratulations, Signor Jupiter! . . . Well, my friend, if you came to us, I for my part should be extremely glad; but your interests before everything—that is a matter of course. We shall always find condottieri, doubtless less renowned, but more accommodating.
ANGUILLARA: At the price you name, you will not get any captain of note; neither the Cardinal di Capua, nor Gattamelata the Magnificent, nor the Colleoni, nor the Piccinino, nor dal Verme, but fighting men of an inferior stamp. But as you please! Remember, however, that cheap wares are the ruin of their purchaser. I had already ten steel bombards; I have just bought six more, and they were delivered to me yesterday. Two are the invention of young Michael Angelo Buonarotti. They shoot stones eight times as big as your head, and with a range of perhaps four hundred paces! I am not exaggerating.
BRANDOLINO: It is absolutely true, I saw the tests and was terrified.
ANGUILLARA: No companies possess artillery that can be compared with mine; for I have only spoken of bombards, and I have a host of culverins, cannon and squibs, worked by Germans who cost me each sixteen florins a month, exclusive of perquisites; but let us omit these details—I have no wish to dazzle you with them. I have two thousand men-at-arms thoroughly trained and fully equipped, a thousand admirable Albanian mercenaries, and four thousand foot, picked infantrymen all. It seems to me that in asking for sixteen thousand ducats I am not asking too much.

QUIRINI: Certainly . . . certainly . . . and we should even give you the sum you desire without too much hesitation, were it not that slanderous tongues tax you with never letting your troops fight, for fear of damaging them.

ANGUILLARA (emphatically): My view, like that of all genuine soldiers, is to win battles and decide campaigns by manœuvring. I have no wish to massacre men unnecessarily. Such a principle is as clear as crystal! What folly, what savage cruelty to let poor devils of soldiers be killed or wounded for the mere pleasure of hitting at a venture! Good enough for Swiss, Frenchmen, Spaniards . . . barbarians all! *We* are Italians!

QUIRINI: Unfortunately these barbarians attack with might and main, and at that game they are bound to end by winning the day.

ANGUILLARA: As long as I live, I shall conduct war according to rules.

QUIRINI: What think you of our discussion, most illustrious Signor poet, you who eternally portray us the god Mars raging amid the bleeding battalions?

CARITEO: Every age has its fashions, and poets generally imagine what does not fit in with real life.

ANGUILLARA: An excellent answer! Besides, dear Signor Vincenzo, ask your Alviane, who seems wedded to the most serene Republic, since he serves no other power; he will tell you whether he cares to sacrifice his men without reason. All the same, there's an honest fellow for you!

QUIRINI: We refuse him neither honour nor money; we have given him the town and territory of Pordenone. . . .

ANGUILLARA: He has made a paradise of it. You see none there but artists, men of letters, people of talent; his academy is famed far and wide. Put me in a position to lead as refined and exalted a life, and I will serve you as well as he.

QUIRINI: You would promise to stand firm when occasion demanded it, even if it should cost you some lives?

ANGUILLARA: Let us be completely frank! . . . Against other condottieri, never! It would be fine, honourable, loyal, to inflict losses on a comrade who might the next day overthrow my troops and with whom I might hereafter find myself under the same flag under fresh enlistments! Never, I tell you! But barbarians who show no consideration, I will attack with all my heart, and you will not refuse to indemnify me, so much for each man slain, so much for each man wounded, so much for each horse, taking into account loss of baggage. . . . Does that suit you?

QUIRINI: We are beginning to understand each other.

ANGUILLARA: Then we can draw up the agreement. That will be to-morrow morning, if you please, and for the moment, will you sup with us?

BRANDOLINI: I notify that La Morella is here.

QUIRINI: Really.

ANGUILLARA: Bravo! How the fire leaps to his cheeks!

QUIRINI: But your camp, my dear friend, is at once an Athens and an Amathus*!

BRANDOLINI: Moreover we have musicians of most uncommon merit, and that incomparable dancer Gian Pagolo. And Signor Cariteo and Serafino Aquilino are going to read to us their latest poems.

ANGUILLARA: Come, to table!

QUIRINI: One word more, I beg! If we manage to agree as to the engagement, and you enter the service of the Republic, your troops will not harry the peasantry overmuch?

ANGUILLARA: I keep strict discipline, you may rely on that. Ask the Captain here, Messer Bartolommeo Falciera, what he thinks of my discipline. He has just had a taste of it.

QUIRINI: We make a great point of that; it is worth gold.

ANGUILLARA: Enough of business for to-day—let us think now only of amusement. Come to supper!

* A town in ancient Cyprus devoted to the worship of Venus.—Tr.

VENICE.

A chamber in the Duke's palace.—The three State Inquisitors sitting.—A table covered with letters and papers.

FIRST INQUISITOR (letter in his hands): This is the news. The French, after their insolent triumph at Rome and Naples, have left the latter city in a state of utmost disorder. No reason or restraint or foresight! The Aragonese are chasing them; the Papal troops are harassing them. They go by full day's marches without stopping, and are striving to reach and cross the Apennines.

SECOND INQUISITOR: It was decided yesterday that we should abandon neutrality. Has the order to attack gone forth? Is our army in good condition for fighting?

THIRD INQUISITOR: Here are the last reports of the most illustrious Provveditori, and of our General, the Marquis of Mantua; then the Senator, Messer Vincenzo Quirini, announces to us that he has come to terms with the Count dell' Anguillara. Thus we have forty thousand men, and the French are at most seven thousand.

SECOND INQUISITOR: If Fra Girolamo Savonarola harboured a little wisdom in his rhetorical head, it would not be hard for him to dig before the enemy such a trench as they could not cross; but instead of thinking of affairs, he dreams of moral reform!

FIRST INQUISITOR: I have received a note from the head of the arsenal at Padua. The last consignments of stores for our troops have left. Nothing is wanting to the general equipment. The provisions are abundant.

SECOND INQUISITOR: We can have every hope. It is now important to think what we shall do after an almost certain

victory. Shall we restore to our ally, the Duke of Milan, those fortresses of his which we occupy?

FIRST INQUISITOR: Let us not even think of it. No

THIRD INQUISITOR: It is here that the help of the Florentines would be precious to us.

profitable alliance has ever been made with a popular government. Let us reckon on none but ourselves, and let us be resolved beforehand to restore nothing to Ludovico. Do you not think it would be well to advise the illustrious Provveditori of our resolutions?

THIRD INQUISITOR: Assuredly.

SECOND INQUISITOR: Naturally I incline to your opinion. We shall inform the most serene Prince and the Ten of the Council's opinion. Let us turn to other matters.

FLORENCE.

Signor Vespuccio's house.—Vespuccio, Marsilio Ficino, translator of Plato; the painter Baccio della Porta, Francesco Valori, Niccolò Machiavelli.

VESPUCCIO: The French have managed things so badly that they are now driven out of Naples, threatened so dangerously in the Romagna that M. d'Aubigny is forced to evacuate that province, and the Duke of Milan has found no difficulty in raising troops against them—he who first called them in.

VALORI: All to the good of our cause! The French, if secure at Naples, would have wished to show us their resentment at the way in which Messer Gino Capponi gave them their dismissal. Now that they are beaten, these doubtful friends will be more amenable; they will give us back Pisa, which hitherto they have always refused to do.

MACHIAVELLI: Whether they do so or no, I should not care to predict anything, for their King is a feather-brain, and his inspirations come to him from every wind that blows. But I am not satisfied with our position at home.

VALORI: Why so, pray, Messer Niccolò? The government of the people is well-established; the results of the last elections were admirable; our magistrates are men of firmness and moderation, and, in spite of the seven years it has lasted, Fra Girolamo's reputation with our populace seems all the younger—it has all the savour and all the credit of novelty. I consider that things are going as well as they can.

VESPUCCIO: And they are bound to go well, if only because we no longer have the Medici. I am ready to face every conceivable misfortune save that of seeing their family re-establish its detestable influence.

VALORI: There can be no question about that.

MACHIAVELLI: I only wish I could share your opinion, but I do not look on affairs in so favourable a light. We want a Republic that is democratic and stable, where everyone works and enjoys a well-balanced liberty. To obtain such a result, I agree with Signor Vespuccio; we do not need the influence of those powerful families which weigh down one side of the scales and make it sink too low. On this score I, above all, reject the Medici. Yet it seems to me that our government works on springs a trifle too stiff, hard and taut, which will lead to troublesome explosions.

VESPUCCIO: Why? Because Piero's creatures are roughly handled? Where is the harm? Nay, it is a necessity; they do rightly in punishing these folk, so as to show that it is not well to follow their example. You hold that Fra Girolamo's partisans carry their zeal too far? True, perhaps; their ways of preaching virtue and causing it to be practised are not always courteous; but, deuce take it! you cannot make omelettes

without breaking eggs. Fra Girolamo himself believes a little too seriously in what he says, and between you and me, a smile comes to my lips rather often when I see him vehemently declaim against some human weakness or other which is not worth all the uproar he makes. But what do you expect? We have need of him; if the masses of Florence and the heated enthusiasts did not imagine that the good Frate was opening the gates of paradise and reforming the world, do you suppose that the mere love of good government would keep them on our side? More than one of them would care but little for the welfare we are securing him, and would infinitely prefer the idleness of a vicious hanger-on of the Medici to the wise and well-ordered life of a respectable citizen.

VALORI: I have a higher opinion of our fellow-citizens, Messer Vespuccio, and I take it for granted that the greater part of mankind are virtuous by nature, and willing to follow the right path when it is pointed out.

FICINO: For my part, if I am allowed to state my view, I am deeply moved and affected by the universal effort which raises a whole people towards the enchanted spheres of the Good and the Beautiful. What can be more admirable than to see all the noble passions leagued against the evil ones, and the churches always full, while the taverns are empty!

MACHIAVELLI: I am like you, that is to say, I observe with extreme interest the debates of the Councils, while at the same time the excellent administrative measures give me the impression of an activity well directed in theory. However, I do not know whether this situation can last.

VESPUCCIO: Why, pray, do you feel these doubts?

MACHIAVELLI: There is too much outward calm and too little inner repose. Those who are satisfied are satisfied either too passionately, like Signor Vespuccio, or too systematically, like Signor Valori.

VESPUCCIO: For myself, as is well known, I hate the Medici, and the moment that their happiness declines mine is in the ascendant; nothing could be more natural.

VALORI: I assure you, Signor Niccolò, that, taking everything into account, and guarding against the exaggeration of one's desires, there are good grounds for satisfaction.

MACHIAVELLI: I would rather you had no need to prove the fact to yourself. What is certain is that under their mask the parties opposed to our settlement are more exasperated than ever. The Arrabbiati, for the last few weeks, have even openly manifested an impudence which gives me food for reflection; the Palleschi are almost on the point of avowing their intention of bringing back the heirs of Lorenzo the Magnificent; the Compagnacci raise their heads and, in the open street, utter their coarse insults against Fra Girolamo. I notice that many let them have their say and even laugh at their sallies, though disapproving of them all the while. As for the Tepidi, we know for certain that they are making recruits among those who are wearied by a renunciation of every pleasure—somewhat too rigorous a discipline for the man of average temperament. Finally, the neighbouring governments, the Milanese, the Sienese, and others, are frightened by the exorcisms of our saintly preacher. He is charged with wishing to despoil the rich for the benefit of the poor, and with being an arch-demagogue. Rome is a party to the game, and multiplies its admonitions. Only yesterday there came one, and Fra Girolamo is forbidden to continue preaching.

VESPUCCIO: It is a most feeble prohibition, and Fra Girolamo will disregard it entirely. What are your conclusions?

MACHIAVELLI: We ought, perhaps, to demand less perfection from the Florentines, and proceed to govern them not as we might wish, but as we can.

DELLA PORTA: That is not my view. The important thing is to maintain a good sound doctrine; those unwilling to submit to it will be compelled. However, a new generation, which will have the proper sentiments, is gradually growing up, and the future holds excellent prospects. It is of the future that we must think.

FICINO: You argue like a true philosopher. I am in entire agreement with Signor Baccio.

VESPUCCIO: It is all the more necessary to keep things as they are, because we are thus safe in treating the Medici and their adherents without remorse, if that rabble raise their heads ever so little.

VALORI: Perhaps, too, there would be drawbacks in appearing less zealous than the masses.

MACHIAVELLI: I begin to be no longer so assured of our final success. A straw fire is a fine thing, it flares up; but if we turn our heads a moment and look again, it is out.

A Hellenist's house.—Study.—A bust of Socrates in green bronze. Small tables laden with books, mostly bound in parchment; a quantity of open folios on the big table; manuscripts, papers stained with ink and covered with a delicate, cramped handwriting; a large leaden inkstand, pens with bristly ends.—The Hellenist is in an armchair with carved oak back. He holds an open volume before him, on the table. His two elbows are placed on either side; his head rests on his hands; he reads attentively and in complete absorption.

MAIDSERVANT (entering): Signor Doctor! . . . the hour of the sermon! Don't you hear the bells? . . . If you don't want to go to church, say so! I have already told you four times! Are you deaf? Ho, Signor Doctor!

HELLENIST: What is it, child?

MAIDSERVANT: The sermon! the sermon! the sermon! Fra Girolamo is preaching at Santa Maria del Fiore! All the Fathers of San Marco will be there! And the Signiory! and the guilds! and everybody! The sermon! Do you understand?

HELLENIST: Oh, the sermon, true—there is a sermon. . . I see no drawback in going to a sermon.

MAIDSERVANT: No drawback? What do you mean? You're making game of me! If you don't come to the sermon, you can boil your soup yourself. I shall certainly not stay with an unbeliever.

HELLENIST: You would be quite right, my girl! You're a good girl! I am glad to see such feelings in you. Go! I shall put on my maroon gown and follow you.

MAIDSERVANT: Don't lose too much time; don't begin musing as usual; you won't find a place. . . . Wait a minute! Here are your Horæ!

HELLENIST: I tell you I shall be there before you!

Exit maidservant.

Hm! Interrupted in the study of this difficult passage to go and hear the trash with which they regale the ears of the mob! The sense of this most important phrase depends entirely on the syllable on which we put the accent! . . . The antepenultimate! . . . Yes, the antepenultimate, I quite understand, but then . . . we'll see; I have to go and stupefy myself with this Savonarola's rubbish! . . . What slavery! Oh, the dullards! Oh, the fanatics! When shall we be delivered from them, ye immortal gods, Muses and Nymphs? . . . But I must make haste, so as not to incur the risk of persecution. It's a wonder already that the police have not paid me a visit! When will this tyranny end?

THE APENNINES.

A wild landscape ; moss-covered rocks, pines stripped and flung at random ; an enormous plain at the foot of the heights ; the Taro meandering through the plain ; the village of Fornovo in the distance.—French detachments are arrayed in battle-order on the lowest slopes of the mountain ; every moment there pass ordnance companies, bands of Albanian mercenaries, Gascons, Germans, Swiss ; drivers lead pieces of artillery and carriages laden with baggage. On the right, at some distance, a Venetian outpost, composed of Dalmatian infantry and some Italian men-at-arms, their breastplates gleaming in the sun ; most have their visors lowered, and all stand, with lance in rest, ready for attack.—On a hillock forming an elevated plateau, King Charles VIII. is half lying down amid trusses of straw ; he is surrounded by numerous courtiers and captains ; among them are to be distinguished Philippe de Commines, Lord d'Argenton ; M. Etienne de Vesc, Seneschal of Beaucaire ; M. de Bourdillon, M. de Bonneval, M. de Piennes.

THE KING : I have promised the Pisans my protection—I shall not go back on my word and hand these people over to the Florentines. I don't want to hear any more about it! Besides, I came to Italy in order to prove myself chivalrous and please my lady, and not to write, read or sign musty papers! No more talk of negotiations, please! I shall attack the enemy within an hour!

DE COMMINES : It would be better to temporise and listen to reason. If we do not induce Savonarola and the Florentines to aid us, we run a great risk of never getting away from here.

THE KING : I tell you I have performed exploits more brilliant than those of my forbears! I have conquered Italy! I have triumphed at Rome and at Naples before the eyes of the world! Everywhere I have planted my gibbets and my judges ; I have proclaimed my world-wide sovereignity, and that only a few days ago. If I now go back to France, it is merely because I have been betrayed! Let these wretched Federals insult me, and, by my blood and bones! they'll be playing into my hands!

DE COMMINES : I implore Your Majesty to reflect that, after all, to speak the plain truth, we are beating a retreat as fast as we can. We shall be lucky if the retreat is not turned into

a rout, for that is what faces us at the moment. Remember that the enemy outnumber us by four to one; one need only open one's eyes to see that! I therefore think it essential to listen to Savonarola's proposals and to restore Pisa to the Florentines, as in any case we have pledged our word to do.

THE KING: I shall listen to nothing! Your Florentines are cowards, cheats, scoundrels. I'll grind them to powder!

DE COMMINES: We are not in a position to threaten.

THE KING: You are always afraid of everything!

DE COMMINES: We might at least be prudent. Before us is the army of the Venetians and of that same Duke of Milan who invited us here; behind us the troops of the Pope, and the Aragonese in pursuit; we are much in need of someone who will help us.

THE KING: Our swords will suffice! My fleet is certain to have re-taken Genoa by now.

DE COMMINES: I regret to inform Your Majesty that the fleet has just been defeated at Rapallo. A great number of galleons, galleasses, galleys, store-ships and frigates were destroyed or taken; the remainder fled, it is not known where.

THE KING: We shall not be beaten at Fornovo, I give you my word. Order the artillery to advance! Here is Seigneur de Gié.

MARSHAL DE GIÉ (on horseback, in armour, sword in hand, with officers of his staff): I salute Your Majesty and come to take my orders.

THE KING: What is the enemy doing?

MARSHAL: Seeing themselves so strong and us so weak, they are marching in fine order. They are known to possess two thousand five hundred fully-equipped lancers, two thousand Albanian mercenaries and sufficient infantrymen to amount to sixteen thousand men.

THE KING: Monseigneur de Gié, you are a doughty knight! I rely upon you. In fighting I shall try to be of some use; in commanding I am useless; give orders, take your dispositions at your own good pleasure. I shall be the first to obey.

MARSHAL: We shall do our best.

THE KING: Ho! Squires, my arms!

The squires fasten on the King's helmet and make certain that the different parts of his armour are properly fixed; his armoured charger is brought. He leaps into the saddle. To the knights, captains, and soldiers surrounding him:—

Go, gentlemen, to your places, and let every man do his best!

He gallops off with his suite.

DE COMMINES: A deal of honour and no brains! What think you of our position, Monseigneur de Gié?

MARSHAL: In the moment of action I think of striking hard—nothing else matters. At the gallop, gentlemen!

Exit with his suite.

DE COMMINES: If the late king, from his place in blessed paradise, can see the muddle made by his successor, he must be sorely distressed. It is all over with us. That spoilt child will be a prisoner this evening, and so shall I: what a sum of head-money I shall have to spend to pay the ransom! But I hear the arch-madman speaking to his men-at-arms. What can he be saying to them? . . . He has not been instructed in letters. . . . He is, as usual, very incoherent in his speech. . . . The wind is blowing from that direction. . . . I can catch some phrases. . . .

THE KING (in the distance): My brave and daring knights, I should never have undertaken this expedition . . . without my reliance on your valour and prowess. . . . Be assured that it is as easy for us to win the battle as to begin it, or easier. . . . Remember that our forefathers went all over the world . . . gained great spoils and triumphs . . . think only of fighting valiantly . . . and if you prefer . . . to retire in flight, say so in good time. . . .

DE COMMINES: There's superb braggadocio, worthy of the terrible Firebrace! We shall have to pay a trifle too dearly for this shouting before the world is much older. Oh, gentle and merciful Lord Jesus, have pity on us!

THE BATTLE.

The French troops have just charged. The King, sword in hand, raises his visor; his forehead streams with sweat, his eyes shine like lightnings. His horse is panting. The lances wave like corn in a field, and the gonfalons flame and undulate. Banners of every hue are flying, displaying the colours of the escutcheons; trumpet and clarion blasts, rumbling of drums and tabors; cries in the plain, war-cries, cries of rage and pain; clouds of dust rise from every quarter; a dull noise of the discharge of cannon; here and there are seen the dead, the wounded, in heaps, in rows, fallen at random.

BOURDILLON (saluting the King with his sword): Your Majesty is doing wonders!

THE KING: Speak to me frankly, Bourdillon, as to your bosom friend. Have I borne myself well?

BOURDILLON: By the saints! better than Amadis!

THE KING: A grand thing is war! My heart is exalted to the heavens! Forward! See! The mellay is furious on the left! Forward, knights, let us charge!

He once more lowers his visor, brandishes his sword and goes off with the crowd, which cries: "Long live the King! Saint Denis! France!"

ANOTHER PART OF THE BATTLEFIELD.

The Swiss in deep formation.

CAPTAIN RUTTIMANN OF LUCERNE: Ho, my children, look at the Gascons! They've done their work! The Albanians are in headlong flight! If you don't hurry up, there'll be no plunder: your comrades will have taken the pick!

SOLDIERS: It's true, it's true, forward!

CAPTAIN: Lower arms! Charge! Hard!

The Swiss fling themselves with fierce halberd thrusts on a squadron of Milanese men-at-arms, which is broken in an instant and takes to flight; slaughter, shouts, drums, trumpets.

ON THE ALLIES' SIDE.

An eminence.—The Marquis of Mantua, general of the Venetian army; captains of free-lances and Albanian mercenaries, the two Provveditori, nobles of their suite.—In the plain, the various Milanese and Venetian regiments begin to waver.

FIRST PROVVEDITORE: But, my Lord Marquis, I don't understand what it all means! The most serene Signiory has given the men their pay to the uttermost farthing! You have had all that you asked for! You want for nothing . . . provisions, guns, ammunition. . . . Why don't the troops hold their ground?

MARQUIS: I am giving orders; I have no time to answer you.

He speaks to several officers, who go off rapidly in different directions. The artillery comes up.

SECOND PROVVEDITORE: It is intolerable! I shall make a report! It seems to me that the cross-bowmen are taking to flight!

FIRST PROVVEDITORE: The situation is extremely serious.

MARQUIS: Our centre is certainly behaving badly.

SECOND PROVVEDITORE: My lord Marquis, we have a right to question you, and it is your duty to answer!

MARQUIS: Don't you consider that the Milanese are giving us poor support? I do not know what their General Gayazzo is thinking of.

FIRST PROVVEDITORE: Have him arrested!

SECOND PROVVEDITORE: Reflect, for God's sake, reflect, my noble colleague! Such a case is not provided for in our instructions. Your proposal is very daring!

MARQUIS: By St. Mark! What I feared is coming to pass! The Albanians are disbanding to loot the baggage! Our infantry are no longer covered on their right! They are crushed by the cavalry! . . . They fly!

THE TWO PROVVEDITORI: All is lost?

MARQUIS: Faith, almost! Don't stay there, gentlemen! The Gascons are coming up at a gallop! Let us rally our men!

The French bugles sound a charge; the Battle of Fornovo is lost for the Venetians and Milanese.

FLORENCE.

Sandro Botticelli's studio.—An immense hall of great height.—A crowd of artists in picturesque and here and there rather disorderly costume; several occupied on large canvases are perched on scaffoldings; others are finishing pictures or sketching them on easels.—Sandro Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and Fra Benedetto, miniature painter; he wears the habit of a Dominican and bends over a missal placed on a small table; he is illuminating it, taking minute quantities of colours from bowls that he has around. Il Cronaca, architect.

SANDRO (in a plaintive tone): This is my last day as a layman, and this canvas will be my last work; henceforth, I shall only think of lamenting my sins.

FRA BARTOLOMMEO DI SAN MARCO: You will do well, and we shall do well to follow your example. Salvation is worth more than talent, and the palm of the elect outweighs the crown of genius. Amen!

ARTISTS: Amen! Amen!

SIGNORELLI: My children, I think you are going too far. There are good points about the holy doctrine of Fra Girolamo. But to dress like the poor, as many of you affect, to renounce all the pleasures of life, to groan from morning till evening, and above all, to return to the dry forms and angular designs of the old masters—that is not worshipping God in heart and brain, and I do not see that it is of much use.

IL CRONACA: The Good is absolute, and admits of no division.

SIGNORELLI: The Good is infinite; it admits of no narrowness.

Enter the sculptor Torrigiani, magnificently dressed, his biretta low down over his eyes. He slams the door.

TORRIGIANI: May the devil confound you, snuffling hypocrites that you are! I'll smash in the face of the first man who prates to me of that humbug Fra Girolamo!

BOTTICELLI: You will be damned, Torrigiani!

TORRIGIANI: And pray, why? I am a better Christian than you! Idiot! He's a pretty prophet for you! A flatterer of the mob! A phrase-monger! A frantic hypocrite!

Reform! Virtue! Morals! . . . By Bacchus, do you think the delights of this world are made to be trampled underfoot? Do you think that beautiful women are created so as to go and rot alive in closed convents? Are warm wines to be poured into the mud, and are the antique masterpieces that are being dug up every day to return into the earth where the lessons they teach us have been buried and stifled for so long? Am I to go with your monk and burn the new books, so as to quench with their cinders the renascent flame of the intellect? By heaven, no! I cry out to you, I shout to you: you are idiots, apes of unwholesome perfection, monsters of absurdity, and I am leaving Florence this very evening, so as to see and hear no more of it all.

IL CRONACA: For my part, I honour as my father, yes, far more than my father, the venerable, the sublime, the incomparable, the divine Fra Girolamo! If he is ever attacked, I shall defend him even unto death, and those who insult him are brutes! All you can do is to roll your great hectoring eyes at me! I shan't let my face be flattened like little Buonarotti! And if you have the misfortune to come near me, I shall stick my stiletto right in your breast, vile slave of the Medici that you are!

TORRIGIANI: When any of you has uttered that big word, he thinks he has uttered the crowning insult! Wipe your mouth! It is still stained from the pap that Lorenzo the Magnificent crammed you with!

BOTTICELLI: Say what you please, Florence has none the less become the kingdom of God. Jesus holds the sceptre; the most Holy Virgin counsels us through the voice of Girolamo; the rich feed the poor, and there is nothing finer than that.

TORRIGIANI: And you consider it a fine thing, too, to burn good pictures and to begin once more, as you did fifty years ago, painting women like spindles, without breasts or bellies? You think it very grand to be in rags and to weep from

morning till night like a rainspout, without anyone having an idea why?

FRA BARTOLOMMEO: As for you, with your brave show of velvet and embroideries, your plumes and your gilded poniard and your rings, you insult the poverty of your brothers!

TORRIGIANI: Of my brothers . . . of my brothers? And have you all, rabble that you are, the impudence to style yourselves my brothers? Wait a little, until you know how to design a torso and to grasp and render a foreshortening as I do, before you pose as my cousins even! There'll be some time to wait! My brothers are dead! They were the artists of ancient Rome!

DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO: Learn how to chisel us heavenly Madonnas, pure, chaste and severe, and we shall be able to admire you!

TORRIGIANI: May heaven crush you! . . . What are these shouts?

He runs towards the door.

IL CRONACA: Go—to your death! They are the children of the city, who, massed in sacred bands, proclaim the King Jesus, tear the clothes of people dressed like you, and beat and arrest the evil-minded so as to escort them to gaol. Go! go!

TORRIGIANI: Those packs of mad curs won't touch me without my stabbing a dozen of them! Good-bye! I'll leave this lunatic asylum! I will not come back until we are free to portray Mars and Venus! Art, look you, poor tatterdemalions that you are, is the sole virtue, the sole greatness, the sole truth! There is nothing that finds more favour in the sight of God! Your portion is falsehood, ignorance, pedantry, baseness! Mine is refulgent genius! Long life to Art! Long life to light! Down with darkness! I'll go and enlist in the Spanish troops, and wage a war to the death against you!

BOTTICELLI: Yesterday you were all for driving the barbarians from Italy. You have found the way!

TORRIGIANI: We'll exterminate the French first and then the Aragonese! . . . Good-bye . . . vermin!

A PAINTER (gliding down rapidly from a scaffolding): His insolence is too much! . . . There! There's one for you!

Hurls his knife at him, the knife misses its aim and sticks into the wall.

TORRIGIANI (going out): A poor shot! I'll pay you out for that, if I have to wait twenty years.

The interior of the church of Santa Reparata.—A vast, densely-packed crowd. All the altars at the sides are hidden in flowers; the candles and lights glitter; the statues of saints are dressed in their finest robes of silk, velvet and brocade, and loaded with jewels; the smell of incense fills the building; newcomers arrive every moment and make the crowd surge; children, schoolboys, young men are perched on the window-sills and altar screens; many cling to the friezes of the columns; the Signiory occupies the pews facing the pulpit. Profound silence.

FRA GIROLAMO (in the pulpit): Florence! Florence! God has not spared thee His warnings! He does not deny them to thee! He loves thee as He loves His Church. But truth is gloomy; hearken to her! Thy life is spent in bed, in gossip, in idle conversations, in infamous orgies, in nameless debaucheries! Thy life, Florence, is the life of swine!

Tremors in the congregation.

Thou answerest me: "Brother, thou sparest me not!" I shall not spare thee at all! What right hast thou to dread reproofs if thou hast no fear of punishments? Did I predict them? Answer! Answer! . . . Did I, or did I not let thee know what was threatening? This poor brother who is nothing, who is nothing worth, who by himself knows nothing, has he not been inspired by God and by Jesus our King to deliver thee from the Medici and snatch thee from the claws of the French? . . . And what has happened? Hast thou forgotten already? . . . The Medici eat the bread of Venice, and the French. . . the

French, only too happy to have been able, against all likelihood, to scrape through with a victory at Fornovo, have fled, panting and humbled, to the very depths of their country, and there they remain. . . . Fear not! They will return no more!

Profound emotion.

Therefore, however small a gleam of reason thou mayest have left, thou wilt remember that I always told thee it would be thus, that my words have never proved vain, and thou wilt believe me this time when I say to thee: Government by the people is the best for thee! God has granted it to thee by my hand! Keep it! Suffer no one to assail it; he who assails it is insulting God, and is guilty of impiety; he is insulting Jesus our King, he is guilty of treachery, of high treason; wilt thou pardon such a wretch, wallowing in crimes so heinous?

Cries of rage.

My lords of the Eight, I tell you that such scoundrels—those who disturb the public peace and call themselves as before White or Grey—must be punished! Do not hesitate! Ten florins fine! If they repeat the crime, four lashes! If they persist, the dungeon for life! And now, Florence, feed thy poor—they are limbs of Jesus our King! It is not meet that the people go hungry when the rich are gorged. Henceforth wheat will cost no more than a shilling the bushel for those who cannot pay more.

Sensation.

When everyone has enough to eat his fill, the work is not yet begun; all the main part still remains to do. You will answer me: "Brother, you are insatiable! We have the government of God, we have the charity of God, we have." . . . You have legions of vices, growing rank in your souls! All hell holds revel there, you know it only too well, and not one of you is better than another! . . . .Perhaps you will make me excuses for the soldiers, coarse folk! for the merchants, minds

A SAVONAROLA SERMON

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corrupted by gain! for the young men, empty heads! for the women, foolish creatures! Very well. . . . Will you find excuses also for the simoniacal, libidinous, adulterous, drunken, thieving priests who, from the See of St. Peter down to the humblest confessional of the humblest parish, draw you after them on their road to perdition? No more of these afflictions! of these abominations! of these Babylonian enormities! Sweep them away! sweep them away! otherwise, Florence, thou art lost! I swear to thee that thou art lost! The cup of patience is drained! It has not a drop left! The sword of vengeance is upon thee! Ah! hapless one! . . . It is lowered! it strikes!

Cries of terror

You answer: "Brother, what do you ask for?" I ask for nothing. It is God who will have no more of frivolous amusements! Have you not wasted your lives enough? No more parades where the women try to captivate! No more balls, they are perdition! No more taverns, they are brutishness! No more gaming, it is. . . . Ah! that makes you uneasy? You would rather renounce your share of paradise than that shameful practice? Well, I will be merciful. . . . Gamble, if you must! but abandon the dice! Take knucklebones! Gamble, but never for money! Gamble for salads, nuts, roots! Poor creatures, you laugh, and I, I cry to the faithful:— When you see in the streets or the houses misguided persons give themselves up to their passion for games of chance, shrink not from snatching the cards from their hands, and you, my lords of the Eight, arrest them; imprison them! . . . The rack!

The sermon continues.

IN THE SQUARE.

Before the Church.—Groups of children.

YOUNG BONI (crying and shouting): Oh-h-h!

A BOY: What's the matter with you?

The other children gather round him

YOUNG BONI: A big brute has just thumped my head with his fist. It's that man walking away there.

SECOND BOY: Why did he hit you?

YOUNG BONI: Because I wanted to pull off his Venetian lace collar.

THE CHILDREN: Oh, the beast. Let's run after him! Let's tear him to pieces!

THIRD BOY: Don't do anything, he's a monster! It's Torrigiani, the sculptor, a compagnacco! He loves neither God nor the Holy Virgin! He's too strong for us!

Two girls pass; a dozen children surround them

FIRST BOY: My sisters, in the name of Jesus Christ, King of this city, and of the Virgin Mary, our Queen, I command you to take off those jewels and strip yourselves of all that velvet.

FIRST GIRL: We'll obey you at once, dear child. Let us go into our house.

FOURTH BOY: I know them, they're past praying for! We already urged them the day before yesterday to be less immodest; they's always starting afresh.

SECOND GIRL: It takes time to sew new dresses, you must understand, my little friend!

FIFTH BOY: Let's pull off everything!

The band rushes at the two damsels and tears to pieces their finery and their head-dresses.

SIXTH BOY: Good! two necklaces! earrings! bracelets! chains! Let's give them to the poor!

Other children run up.

FIRST CHILD: What are those women crying for?

A BOY OF TWELVE: They are sinners whom we've led back to virtue. And you, where do you come from?

THE CHILD: From begging! Fifty ducats! Then we despoiled the gamesters! Now, look here! Listen! At the corner of the Via Cocomero, I know a house where they keep profane books, a chess-board, harps, also a looking-glass, I think, but I am not certain. Come, all of you! Let us cleanse that hell!

THE CHILDREN: Come along!

A CITIZEN: Ho! Nicola! come here, my boy!

NICOLA: What do you want, father?

CITIZEN: Go indoors, I have to talk with you.

NICOLA: I have to serve Jesus and repress sinners!

CITIZEN: Accursed brat, will you obey me?

NICOLA: It is better to obey God than men! Come along, lads!

Bustle in the crowd coming out of church.

A CHILD (perched in a tree): Here's the Father! Here's the Father!

Under the porch appears Fra Girolamo, surrounded by the Fathers of San Marco, among whom are Fra Silvestre Maruffi, the Padre Buonvicini, the Padre Sacromoro, and other zealots. The crowd salutes them with transports; men and women kneel and kiss Fra Girolamo's frock, weeping.

THE CHILDREN: The hymn! The hymn! Chant the hymn!

They sing.

"Lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tuae Israel!"*

Fra Girolamo departs, amid the adoration of the crowd.

A room in the house of Tanai de'Nerli; his wife, his son.

NERLI: In a word, I am tired of these scenes, and I'll have no more of them. I'll live as I please; I'll have peace in my house.

WIFE: So far as I am concerned, I will not bow to the yoke of the demon.

NERLI: Whom do you call demon, pray? Me?

* "A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people, Israel!"

WIFE: No, not you, but the spirit that possesses you. Why keep that horrible book which the Prophet caused to be burnt in the open square? Have you not a copy of that "Decameron," since I must name it?

NERLI: You're making a lot of din about a book which has been in everyone's hands for centuries.

WIFE: For long ages everyone has been working his own damnation, and it is time to stop.

NERLI: I want peace, and this time I tell you that in all seriousness.

CHILD: Do you see, mamma, he has the book and others also which Fra Girolamo has forbidden! Yes, I know it. Let us burn, burn these books!

WIFE: Yes, my darling, don't be afraid! I shall not allow what I ought not to allow.

NERLI: This is raving madness, and I insist on your calming down, Monna Lisa; otherwise, I shall take such steps——

WIFE: It is useless to try and browbeat me; you won't succeed; in spite of you I'll work out my salvation!

CHILD: Yes, mamma, do work out your salvation! Work out your salvation, mamma!

WIFE: Yes, dearest! fear not!

NERLI: This is a house of demoniacs in a city of madmen, and this Florence, which before was only a baggage, is now become a lunatic since that cursed monk——

WIFE (beside herself): Ah! do not blaspheme Fra Girolamo, I implore you!

NERLI: I'll send Fra Girolamo to the devil if I please, and you, too! Do you hear?

WIFE: And I, you monster, I'll run and denounce you to the Eight and demand an exemplary punishment for such wickedness.

CHILD: Yes, mamma! Papa must be punished!

NERLI: May heaven confound you all!

ROME.

JUNE, 1500.

The Vatican.—A room in the pontifical apartments.—Alexander VI.; Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Bisaglia. She is in deep mourning, seated in an arm-chair, much distraught and her face stained with tears.

ALEXANDER VI.: Yes, it is true. Your brother Cesare is the culprit. He went into the room where your unhappy husband Alfonso lay, with his wounds in bandages; he strangled him. . . . I confess it . . . you would be told anyway . . . you would not take four steps in the city without hearing of it. . . . I had rather you learnt it from me, so that we can consider together what ought to be done in such circumstances, which cannot be altered.

Lucrezia sobs into her handkerchief and wrings her hands.

The essential character of all sorrow, however great it may be (and yours is very great, my daughter, and more justified than any other sorrow can be) . . . the character of all sorrow is that it is followed by oblivion.

LUCREZIA: Ah! Holy Father!

ALEXANDER VI.: I am speaking to you reasonably. Persons in our station must always be reasonable, otherwise they become meaner than anyone else. Sorrows, the most bitter despairs, all that comes to shock us and rob us of some possession or other, these cruel reverses of fortune, all this appears only in order to be forgotten. A day will come when you yourself will be astonished to find yourself hardly able to recall the features and perhaps the name of this husband, whose loss at present afflicts you with a grief that seems to you intolerable.

LUCREZIA: To lose him! . . . To lose him like this! . . . Murdered by my brother! . . . at the moment when he was overjoyed at the birth of his son! . . . What kind of a monster is his murderer?

ALEXANDER VI.: He is not a monster, my daughter, but a ruler who could not enter his destined sphere but at the

price of the most sustained and sometimes the most pitiless efforts. Listen to me, Lucrezia, and don't raise your hands to Heaven. I do not speak to you either to justify Don Cesare foolishly or to insult you; I am trying to awaken in you what I know to be clear-cut, true, and powerful sentiments, and to enable you to pass through a crisis in which youth and experience do not admit of your showing yourself in your most heroic light.

LUCREZIA: I am a miserable widow mourning for an innocent husband, slaughtered by the most infamous of traitors!

ALEXANDER VI.: What is the use of words so violent? Let us consider, Lucrezia. . . . You know that I love you, from the depths of my heart?

LUCREZIA: I know also to what horrible suspicions and accusations the affection of your Holiness exposes my honour! But I am in despair, and I care about nothing any more in the world!

ALEXANDER VI.: People say that I am both your father and your lover? Lucrezia, let the world, let that mass of grubs, as absurd as they are feeble, imagine the most ridiculous tales about the strong. In their powerlessness to understand the aims of our souls, they see only in them the eccentric; they cannot analyse the workings and still less perceive the bearing, and they think to discover in the mysterious bosom of this unknown the stupid infamies for which they can hardly find a name. Let these gusts of futility whirl about your head without finding an entrance. Let us speak only of the things that matter. You must shake off this despondency. Your situation requires that; you must not, and I will not let you, shut yourself up in solitude; I will not allow you to return to Nepi, where you desire at this moment to bury for ever yourself and your sorrows. That will not do. Nature herself opposes such a step; you are young, beautiful, energetic, intelligent, active; you need life, and life needs you. Stay with us, stay in this world to rule

LUCREZIA BORGIA

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it! You say you have lost a husband who was dear to you? I regret, I deplore this as you do, and I would have given much to spare you the pang. Nevertheless, you are Madam Lucrezia Borgia; your blood is among the noblest known; you are Duchess of Bisaglia and Sermoneta, Princess of Aragon, perpetual Governor of Spoleto; you are looked upon as almost the equal of crowned heads; you were born with the instinct of queening it over the nations, and your mind—I know how elevated it is—will never allow you to withdraw from this task.

LUCREZIA: Once upon a time, may be, I took pleasure in watching the course of affairs and touching the wires that make them move. . . . That time is past. I have decided to busy myself no more with anything but my son, and, when I have the power, with my vengeance.

ALEXANDER VI.: Take care, Lucrezia! Never repeat to anyone but me so dangerous a word. Your brother knows what he wants and wants what he has a right to. It is necessary that his plans should succeed, and if one day he came to think he had been deceived in you, and that you are not really the strong and intelligent woman he claims you to be; if, in short, he found in you a hindrance and not a help, you would not be more secure against him than were your brother Giovanni and your unfortunate husband whom he stabbed under my very cloak . . . and so many others. . . .

LUCREZIA: Don Cesare is the last person to frighten me, and, if he defies you, he will not defy me!

ALEXANDER VI.: That is how I love to see you, and now I recognise you! The little middle-class widow has disappeared! It is the Queen, the Sovereign, who speaks! . . . My daughter, you are at this moment as beautiful as Pride! You are strength itself! Hence I will speak to you. Don Cesare has never had the least intention of hurting you, and you will understand that if you reflect a little. When, two years ago, we made you leave Giovanni Sforza, and married you to Don Alfonso of Aragon, we obeyed necessity and made an

irreproachable match. Although your consort was only the natural son of the King of Naples, we gained through him a mighty ally, and at that moment it was impossible to secure anything better for our ulterior projects. Since then, things have greatly altered. The indomitable energy of Don Cesare, his adroitness, his wealth of resource, the favourable opportunities which he has seized, and from which he has squeezed all the juice, allow us now to enjoy the favour, the close friendship, the affection of the successor of Charles VIII. We have and shall have by this means what the Spanish would never have given us; and you can imagine how unsuitable Don Cesare then considered an Aragonese alliance, at the precise moment when we were compelled to become French heart and soul, and with most scrupulous care to avoid giving umbrage to that most foolish, most credulous, most suspicious of princes, Louis XII.

LUCREZIA: And this was the object for which Don Alfonso was murdered?

ALEXANDER VI.: This and no other. I admit that there were other ways of going about the business. You could yourself have persuaded the unfortunate Don Alfonso to abandon his father, his family and his country.

LUCREZIA (sobbing): He would have done anything I asked him!

ALEXANDER VI.: We will not go over that ground again. Don Cesare was wrong in the form . . . in the matter he reasoned correctly, and so far from his wishing any ill to you, I shall prove to you that he only thinks of your elevation.

LUCREZIA: I dispense him from that.

ALEXANDER VI.: In judging your brother, there is one truth above all that you must take into account, and perhaps such an examination would also be useful in explaining you to yourself. We are not shifty, inconstant Italians; we are Spaniards and, where violence is concerned, an innate tendency impels us to the shortest cut. What our compatriots are doing in the New Indies—the hardness of the Duke of

Veragua and his companions towards the natives of those countries—we of the House of Borgia, Don Cesare in particular, are doing in Italy. That is why I am inclined to think that, troubling but little about means and restraining ourselves but little in action, we are free from the most oppressive bonds which paralyse other men, and we shall thus succeed all the more rapidly in establishing our greatness on firm foundations—the great task to which we must devote ourselves heart and soul.

LUCREZIA: I did not ask to marry Don Alfonso. Under pretext of my extreme youth, I was not even consulted in the matter, any more than I was before, when my first marriage was arranged and broken off, or still earlier, on the occasion of my first betrothal. What is the meaning of these words swollen with wind? Do you imagine that you dazzle me by the tinsel with which you have loaded me? By right of my husband, I am Duchess of Bisaglia . . . but to-morrow the King of Naples can deprive me of this fief, which was a gratuitous gift. Sermoneta you took from the Gaetani and bestowed on me; someone else will take it back from me to pass it on to newcomers. I am perpetual Governor of Spoleto. But Spoleto belongs to the Church, and when you are dead, what will that perpetuity count for? No, Holy Father, I am nothing but a wretched woman whose family makes her a mere pawn in the game, whose interests are no more considered than her feelings. In such a situation, there remains to me my pride; you made me leave Nepi, I intend to go back there; I shall not come away again until obliged to do so by my duties as a mother and an outraged wife.

ALEXANDER VI.: Your future is not the one you have just described, but one that I will proceed to unfold to you. You incriminate your kinsfolk? But consider how solicitous of your welfare they have been. In the times before we rose to power, we bethought ourselves of a nobleman, rich and of good birth and kindred, and we thought he would be a proper match for you. But very soon after, the wind having

filled our sails and the ship of our fortunes having taken to the high seas, we at once set you free from this moderate happiness, and took you with us on our own voyage. At that period it was a great gain to acquire for you some sort of a prince; we sought, we found, we gave you one. Times have changed once more; the falcons have been turned into eagles; their prey must be more lordly; they wish you to have a share; what suited you once suits you no more; you are worth something better. What would you say to a sovereign, really sovereign throne? To a husband belonging to one of the noblest houses in the world—himself handsome, brave, intrepid, one of the best generals in Italy, marked out for the highest destinies, one who loves you to adoration and asks for your hand?

LUCREZIA: I do not know of whom you speak, and do not care either.

ALEXANDER VI.: I speak of Don Alfonso d'Este, son and heir of Duke Ercole of Ferrara. I speak of your true greatness, of your future, of your happiness; of the future, the happiness, the life of your son. You hear, Lucrezia?

LUCREZIA: At the moment I am incapable of listening to such proposals or to argue on whatever justice they may have.

ALEXANDER VI.: That I can well imagine. But you can nevertheless already make up your mind that it is not convenient for you to return to Nepi. To persuade you the more, I will tell you of a design I have formed in concert with Don Cesare, which will prove to you my affection and your brother's devotion to your true interests.

LUCREZIA: I should like to know what you mean.

ALEXANDER VI.: Business compels me to leave Rome for some time. You will remain here; you will take my place. The government will be put in your hands; you will have the sole right of opening and reading dispatches, of taking resolutions and of giving orders. I have commanded my most trusted Cardinals to confer with you whenever you think fit. Thus, Lucrezia, you will rule the Papal States and the world,

spiritual and temporal. I know that you are worthy of grasping the importance of such a task. Believe me. Give up those tears that are unworthy of you, simply because they are useless. Think of the glory of your house, of the future of our settlements, and remember that all other considerations vanish before so lordly an ambition. Know henceforward that for the kind of persons whom fate summons to dominate others, the ordinary rules of life are reversed, and duty becomes quite different. Good and evil are lifted to another, to a higher region, to a different plane. The virtues that may be applauded in an ordinary woman would in you become vices, merely because they would only be sources of error and ruin. Now the great law of the world is not to do this or that, to avoid one thing and run after another; it is to live, to enlarge and develop our most active and lofty qualities, in such a way that from any sphere we can always hew ourselves out a way to one that is wider, more airy, more elevated. Never forget that. Walk straight on. Simply do what you please, but only so far as likewise suits your interests. Leave to the small minds, to the rabble of underlings, all slackness and scruple. There is only one consideration worthy of you—the elevation of the House of Borgia and of yourself; and I hope that in so serious a reflection there is enough to dry your tears and to make you accept that which, being henceforth an accomplished fact, has become indifferent. I leave you, Lucrezia, and call upon you to consider yourself as one who will soon be Duchess of Ferrara and at present represents for the nations the Vicar of God!

VENICE.

A room in a palace of the Gran Canale.—Piero de'Medici, walking up and down with a troubled air, his hands beside his back; his brother, the Cardinal Giovanni de'Medici, afterwards Pope Leo X., now nineteen years of age; his cousin Giulio de'Medici, afterwards Pope Clement VII., now Knight of St. John and Prior of Capua; Bernardo Dovisi da Bibbiena, steward of the Cardinal's house and sometime private secretary to Lorenzo the Magnificent.

BIBBIENA: That our affairs are in a bad way it would be puerile to deny, but I do not think there is any need, Lord Piero, for such despair as yours.

PIERO: I have made mistakes, terrible mistakes. I ought not to have ceded so much to the French when I tried to turn them aside from Florence. After coming to an understanding with them I ought at least to have called them to my aid before leaving for Bologna, where that miserable Giovanni Bentivoglio, forgetting what he owes to our father's memory, has compelled us to recognise how little he is worth himself, and to take flight here. . . . Ah! if ever I succeed in raising our fallen fortunes, he shall know, he shall know what vengeance means. But that is not my chief vexation—as I tell you, what trouble me most are my own mistakes.

GIOVANNI: Brother, brother, don't fret so! I stayed at Florence after you, and I assure you that there was nothing to be done. Our enemies had so arranged everything and worked upon the minds of the citizens that our dismissal was a foregone conclusion. Luca Corsini, Jacopo de' Nerli, all those envious folk had stirred up even the most easy-going people. In vain I spoke to them, they did not listen to me; I had to withdraw, I even had stones thrown at me. Savonarola was against me. It was he who persuaded the Dominicans of San Marco to expel me from their convent, where I had at first found refuge.

PIERO: A house that *we* founded.

GIOVANNI: Be not so distressed, brother. It is highly probable, I repeat, that Fra Girolamo had perverted the minds of the good Fathers, otherwise they would not have acted as they did. It was a dreadful sight, that infuriated mob

through which I fled disguised as a poor friar; a crowd of ruffians roaring, shouting, breaking open prison doors and embracing thieves and murderers as they let them out!

BIBBIENA: That is the way in which the populace plays its part in public affairs.

PIERO: I shall make what I can out of this. But there are worse horrors. You have learnt that our uncle's sons, our cousins, have managed, by stooping to various meannesses, to re-enter the city and recover their property. The more to prove their attachment to their new masters, the wretches have solemnly renounced their name, and bear that of Popolani; so that to-day I announce to you the existence of a respectable Signor Lorenzo Popolani, and of his bother, worthy of him in all respects, the honourable Signor Giovanni Popolani. What mockery, what misery, what a mass of infamies there is in this world!

GIOVANNI: I will make the most of our cousins' defection. They are not friends whom we shall miss, and, frankly, I am far more affected by the fact that our rebel kinsmen have destroyed the gardens where our father had collected so many statues and pictures, the works of the great masters of every age. The general looting has caused the disappearance of books, medals, and cameos. There were things there that I shall always remember—their loss is irreparable.

PIERO: What does that matter? We ourselves are lost! Here we are, condemned to wander endlessly from one place to another, passing from the hands of warm to those of cold friendship and ever on the look-out lest some treacherous ally sell us to our foes. For the time being, the most serene Senate is behaving generously towards us; but how long will this last?

BIBBIENA: As long as the Venetians have a hatred of Florence, and that is for ever. No, I say once more, do not despair! In this world, affairs are in constant oscillation, veering from right to left and from left to right. The interests of Italy form the needle of the balance, and for that reason they change

even more rapidly than other interests. For my part I am convinced that the Medici will one day return to Florence, and will recover their power and prestige.

GIOVANNI: Indeed I think that is probable. France is obeying a new King, this Louis XII., who, I am told, is possessed of a thirst for conquest even more than the late Charles VIII.; what he wants is not only Naples, but the Milanese. An understanding may perhaps be arrived at; besides, Savonarola cannot last for ever. He is beginning to wear out men's patience. The Republicans are not united; many of our partisans are returning to the city and are not molested there. Why, young Michael Angelo, to quote no other instance, had fled to Bologna, and the Aldobrandini had even procured him work at San Petronio; none the less, he went back to Florence and is tolerated there.

GIULIANO: Better still, they accept our money. In accordance with your orders, Signor Piero, I sent some to Tornabuoni. He writes me that the number of his pensioners is on the increase. My Lord Giovanni, will you come and visit Titian's studio?

GIOVANNI: With pleasure. I will let you see my new liveries for our gondoliers.

PIERO: Go and amuse yourselves. I will write some letters with Bibbiena.

FLORENCE.

A shop parlour.—Two merchants at table.

FIRST MERCHANT: Take another helping of this pastry. Fra Girolamo's Piagnoni can't see us.

SECOND MERCHANT: You are very kind. I have a weak digestion and dare not take any more. I repeat, England is a country for making fine profits.

FIRST MERCHANT: In silks, certainly, and still more in wines. Last year I sent four casks of rather poor quality to my agent in London. He made a good profit. I willingly give Englishmen credit.

SECOND MERCHANT: That's just what I say; they're men of solid worth.

FIRST MERCHANT: All the more, I prefer the Flemish. There are some really excellent merchants in Antwerp.

SECOND MERCHANT: Between ourselves, would it not be better if Fra Girolamo—whom, I beg you to observe, I venerate in other respects—if Fra Girolamo caused to be handed over to us on easy terms all the beautiful objects he orders to be destroyed? Those good Flemings would buy them from us.

FIRST MERCHANT: I agree. The worthy Frate is unapproachable on that point. Besides, you cannot speak to him so freely as you could before. He gets angry at the first word, and insults you.

SECOND MERCHANT: It must be confessed that incorrigible sinners cause him much heartburning.

FIRST MERCHANT: Don't speak of it! I don't know how he resists. Still, he would have done better in keeping that fine golden-flowered tapestry! We should have sold it, and that for ready money. The prophet is preaching this evening at San Nicola. Do you never go and hear him?

SECOND MERCHANT: What do you mean? I make it a sacred duty, and would not for anything in the world incur the charge of lukewarmness; for, between ourselves, I have

some very fine things here, and don't want to attract too much attention.

FIRST MERCHANT: My case precisely, neighbour. In these slippery times one must be wary. Come! let us be starting. The church will be full. Are you taking a candle?

SECOND MERCHANT: I never fail to, it looks well. See, it's a regular ship's mast!

FIRST MERCHANT: Mine is just as good.

Exeunt, laughing.

Fra Girolamo's cell. He is lying at full length on his couch, covering his eyes with his crossed arms. Seated on stools are Fra Silvestre Maruffi, Fra Domenico Buonvicini.

FRA GIROLAMO: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

FRA SILVESTRE: It is you, master, who forsake yourself: we never weary of telling you so.

FRA DOMENICO: I, too, cannot understand this prostration of your energies.

FRA GIROLAMO: I am at the end of my strength. May the Lord Jesus summon me back to Him!

He hides his face on the pillow and weeps loudly.

FRA DOMENICO: What a misfortune to see such a man fallen a prey to such weakness!

FRA GIROLAMO (rising to his feet, crosses his arms and looks at his friends): Do you wish me to admit it? A burden has been weighing on my heart for more than a year. I must rid myself of the load. Listen to me, then. I fear that I have blundered! I am like a traveller who, having started for the heavenly Jerusalem, should find himself suddenly, by taking a wrong turning, in the neighbourhood of Hell!

FRA SILVESTRE: But, master, what is that you are in need of now? Have you not succeeded beyond all expectation? Every day Florence takes a new step on the road to perfection; you are the sole master, they believe in none but you, they love none but you, they desire none but you! The rest

will come of itself. The Pope threatens, but he dare not act!
FRA GIROLAMO: I have blundered, I tell you. I thought that the good was as easy to grasp as to perceive. I did not suspect that action is usually a traitor to intention. Benefits are never accepted, they must be imposed by force. If I counsel, they do not listen to me. I must smite. In that case, where is moderation? Where is the mean? If I utter invectives, I am found to have cursed. If I rebuke, I insult; if I strike with the shepherd's crook, it is a sword that I am steeping in blood, and I am killing the men whom I seek to serve. No, all undergoes a change under my hands, in my hands; honey is changed to gall, softness to fury, firmness to ferocity! Do you think I am blind to what my faithful flock are doing? They are no better than wolves!
FRA SILVESTRE: They seem a little rough at times, that may be; but in general the results are excellent, and an error of detail cannot detract from the merits of the whole!
FRA GIROLAMO: I serve the heavenly cause with the devil's weapons.
FRA DOMENICO: King David had Philistines for his bodyguard!
FRA GIROLAMO: Oh God! Oh God! I would have nothing but purity to surround justice! Recall me hence!
FRA SILVESTRE: And the work, what will become of it if you die?
FRA GIROLAMO: Come what may, I want to go!

He throws himself again on his bed.

———

Night.—A Garden.—A Girl.—A Lover.

THE GIRL: I am so frightened. . . . If my brother suspected anything! . . . Go away, I implore you!

LOVER: No! Your brother is running about the streets to insult the Piagnoni. Don't be afraid? You are afraid? Well, calm yourself; I will go! At any rate, do you love me?

GIRL: I think so. . . . I don't know. . . . I love you just now. . . . Do you wish me to deceive you? Why attach yourself to me? I am fickle. . . . I do not know myself. I love you, my friend, my dear friend! To-morrow, I daresay I shan't love you any more. I have always been frank with you.

LOVER: Words like these are meant to kill me. No matter! I shall cherish you, adore you, serve you! I am yours. I want to die for you!

GIRL: I am so frightened! Kiss me . . . here . . . on the cheek. . . . Poor Fabrizio! . . . I do love you . . . at this moment! Why so distressed? Have you not great work to do? Occupy yourself with the Medici.

LOVER: I trouble as little about the Medici as about their adversaries. My only task is to love you. Farewell! Five days from now without seeing you!

GIRL: Five days? it's too much! Pass this way to-morrow; I may perhaps be able to let you come upstairs.

LOVER: And if I am observed?

GIRL: It's all one to me!

LOVER: There is nothing in the world so lovely, so attractive, so graceful, so fascinating as you!

GIRL: Farewell! Don't repine. Think a little of me, will you?

LOVER: Another kiss!

GIRL: No, to-morrow! Give me your hand, that's enough. Farewell.

LOVER: Do you love me?

GIRL: I don't know.

LOVER. When you've made me die of despair, you'll know, perhaps. Farewell!

ROME

The Pope's room.—Alexander VI.; Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini; the Milanese envoy.

CARDINAL: I tell you, Most Holy Father, if you do not make an end of Fra Girolamo, he will make an end of you.

THE POPE: You have a grudge against him because he refused you five thousand florins. Do you think I am unaware of your intrigues? You are all up in arms against this chatterbox. He tells you home truths. Very hard to bear! He has told me home truths, too! Do I trouble about them? Do I make any pretence of being a saint? I wish to live in peace. Enough of complaints! I shall not take any further notice. I am old; I will die quietly, in spite of you; I will set up my children. Leave me in peace!

CARDINAL: But, Holy Father, it is just your peace that is in question. Only listen to Ludovico Sforza's message to you.

THE POPE: I don't want to hear anything that wearies me or puts me in a temper.

ENVOY: These are not words in the air that I am conveying to you. I have facts and proofs.

THE POPE: Keep them to yourself.

ENVOY: Savonarola has written to all the crowned heads; he asks for a Council and your deposition.

CARDINAL: It is the absolute truth, and many princes are already won over.

THE POPE: Rumours and calumnies.

ENVOY: Here is the letter to the King of France! We intercepted it from a courier. It is signed by Fra Girolamo —here is his seal.

THE POPE: Blood of the Madonna! The dog, the wretch, the coward, the thief, the scoundrel! It is true after all! Ah! you desire my ruin! Let my council be called together . . .

let notice be given to Don Cesare and Donna Lucrezia and . . . Donna Vanozza! This time, it's all over with him!

CARDINAL: I told you it would have to come to this. Your briefs sneered at, your orders trampled under foot, your name reviled in the open pulpit every day, every hour! He treats you as he would the most despicable of men.

THE POPE: I am his master, and he shall know it! I will tear this Girolamo's soul from his belly, and he will learn what is to be gained by rebelling against me!

FLORENCE.

A square.—A group of artisans meets a returning crowd.

A WORKMAN: Hi, you people! The prophet promised to pass through the flames of a pyre to confound his slanderers; has he done it?

A CITIZEN: He? . . . My word, no!

ANOTHER ARTISAN: What . . . he has not? . . . So the Franciscans have lied?

SECOND CITIZEN: Not at all. Franciscans and Fathers of San Marco hurled taunts at each other from a safe distance, and neither side, after a day of debates, has ventured to risk the fire, as they boasted loudly they would. I have been waiting since this morning with many others to see the sight. My opinion is that we are duped. Fra Girolamo is not worth much.

A WEAVER: I begin to think so, too.

A WOMAN: Much good it did to forbid dancing. I have been telling you for some time past, he is nothing but a hypocrite!

A BAKER: I'm going in to supper; I snap my fingers at all the monks in the universe.

The Palazzo Vecchio.—Council chamber.—The Gonfalonier; the Eight.

THE GONFALONIER: Fra Girolamo was altogether wrong in putting himself forward as he has done in this

affair of the pyre. As he was not certain of himself, he ought not to have placed himself under the necessity of feebly backing out. He is getting himself into a very difficult position, and dragging us along with him.

FIRST PRIOR: And the letters from Rome become more threatening every day! Our spokesman, Domenico Bonsi, does not spare us their recital. It would seem as if the Pope were determined to make an end of him. What will become of our settlement and of the popular government without Fra Girolamo?

SECOND PRIOR: If we had not had him escorted by Captain Giovacchino and by Marcuccio Salviati, the mob, furious as it was at seeing itself deprived of a spectacle that had been delighting its imagination for a fortnight, would have torn him to shreds.

GONFALONIER: It cannot be denied, noble signors, that Fra Girolamo's popularity is considerably on the wane. The Medici are scattering their money everywhere; I have certain information on the point. . . . Things cannot last much longer as they are. The Arrabbiati and the Compagnacci run about the streets under arms. Let us come to a decision. Our own safety and that of the commonwealth is at stake.

THIRD PRIOR: If possible, let us not compromise ourselves with anyone, with any party. My advice is to send the Frate an order to leave the city. Follow my reasoning carefully. In acting thus, we save the monk's life, and it is as well to point that out to him and to his friends, so that they may have no doubt of it and may not turn against us; in the second place, we shall satisfy Rome, since we seem to obey its admonitions, and the Frate will thereby cease from his preaching, although we shall have made no decree to that end; thirdly, we rob the partisans of the Medici of all pretext for raising a riot, seeing that the presumptive cause of the discord will be removed. Do you agree?

GONFALONIER: Are we to deliberate on this proposal, gentlemen?

PRIORS: Certainly, certainly. There are good points about the suggestion.

The country near Florence.—The Arno in the background; meadows and trees.

A YOUNG ENGRAVER: This new work of Albrecht Dürer I find very absorbing! I fear that we Italians cannot yet make the most of Finiguerra's invention. Yet it is the glory of the Florentines! I will study the German manner; I will discover its processes, and if I don't do better, or at least quite as well, I shall die of despair.

FLORENCE.

The convent of San Marco.—The choir of the church.—A great crowd, wherein most of the men are armed; monks, likewise armed; Fra Girolamo, Fra Silvestre, Fra Sacromoro, Fra Buonvicini, Francesco Valori, Luca degli Albizzi, Vespuccio.

FRA GIROLAMO: Calm yourselves, my brothers! my children! It is the moment for showing yourselves intrepid! Do not let yourselves be a prey to fear, nothing is in danger!

FRA SACROMORO: Rest assured, my Father! We shall all die rather than abandon you.

FRA GIROLAMO: It is God whom you must serve, not me.

FRA SILVESTRE: What mean those howls?

FRA BUONVICINI: The enemy is entering the church. A terrible mob! Brutal faces!

LUCA DEGLI ALBIZZI: Don't let us lose a minute. Fra Girolamo, give the order to load!

FRA GIROLAMO: Can you think of such a thing? In the Lord's temple!

LUCA DEGLI ALBIZZI: Are you jesting? Is it better to be massacred? Let us attack before they attack us, and I promise you we shall still be the stronger.

FRANCESCO VALORI: For mercy's sake, Messer Luca, no madness! Restrain yourself! The Medici's supporters will not fail to say that we are provoking them. Let us show ourselves generous.

LUCA DEGLI ALBIZZI: Show yourselves blockheads! The chill of cowardice is creeping over you, and you are not sorry to call that disease prudence. Go! go! you are lost! I have no desire to deliver my bones to these wretches, and I am leaving Florence; let them come to my house, and they will get a shower of arquebusades there! Farewell! Let those who have warm blood in their veins be marching!

Draws his sword; exit, surrounded by his friends.

SEVERAL VOICES: We follow you! we follow you!

Discharge of musketry. A man comes up running.

THE RUNNER: Fra Girolamo! Where is Fra Girolamo?

FRA GIROLAMO: Here I am!

THE RUNNER: The Signiory banish you! the Compagnacci bring you the order! Oh, my God! my God! Their one desire is to murder you! They are more than eight hundred! more than three thousand! They are running up! They have just killed two men! Here they are! Hide yourself! save yourself!

FRA GIROLAMO (to the monks): To your cells, brothers! . . . If die one must, it is there! . . . O Florence! Florence!

Great uproar, the women shriek and fly into the chapels. The Compagnacci and the Arrabbiati fire their cross-bows, shout and belabour the crowd.

A COMPAGNACCO: Be off, you scum! The Signory confiscates all the property of laymen who remain here!

FRANCESCO VALORI (to his officer): Is this true, sir?

OFFICER: Absolutely true! The Eight have no other idea than to restore order, and I advise you to withdraw.

VALORI: So you wish to kill Fra Girolamo?

THE OFFICER: On the contrary, we wish for peace, and to that end we are separating the combatants.

FRA SACROMORO: It's a scandal.

A COMPAGNACCO: Hold your tongue, fat monk, or I'll rip your guts out!

FRA GIROLAMO: The crowd is overpowering us. Let us go into the cloisters.

FRA SACROMORO: Let us ring the bells to warn our people.

VALORI: I entreat you, do nothing of the sort! Be moderate! Be calm! Be self-restrained! I'll run and urge the Priors to put an end to all this.

FRA BUONVICINI: Let us defend ourselves! To arms!

The monks with difficulty drag Fra Girolamo into the convent and close the doors. Fighting in the church.

A dilapidated, barely furnished room.—Ser Bernardo Nerli; his wife, a sick child sleeping in a cradle.

SER BERNARDO: Eight soldi for a will and four soldi for the grant; that makes twelve soldi. Add seven deniers for the old yellow coat I have just sold, that gives us twelve soldi, seven deniers.

WIFE: I think the child is less feverish.

SER BERNARDO: May heaven hear you, my love! . . . Yes, he is not so red. . . . I resume! . . . Twelve soldi, seven deniers! Then, too, our neighbour the tailor has promised me a measure of corn for the sonnet which I have to give him this evening, on the occasion of his niece's betrothal.

WIFE: It's a piece of great good fortune; and we still have half the quarter of kid left.

SER BERNARDO: I think then we may consider ourselves raised above penury.

WIFE: But I said so yesterday; I should have no anxiety, if only the little one were better!

SER BERNARDO: Oh, my dearest! . . . May God preserve him to us!

Arquebusades are heard.

When will they have ended their din, those ruffians! Fra Girolamo and his adversaries, I should like to see them in the hottest of hells! So long as they exist, there will be no means of earning a livelihood!

WIFE: Ah, you're right indeed! Instead of preaching and talking so much, they'd do better to let us work!

SER BERNARDO: I'm going to write my sonnet. . . . And the child?

WIFE: He's better.

SER BERNARDO: Kiss me!

Before the house of Francesco Valori.—Vincenzo Ridolfi, Torrabuoni, a crowd of Compagnacci and Arrabbiati; they knock with redoubled blows on the door to break it in.

VALORI'S WIFE (at a window): My good Signors, I swear to you, my husband is not here. Oh, my God! my God!

RIDOLFI: Where is he hiding? Answer, hussy! Where is he, the coward?

THE WIFE: Signor Ridolfi, for pity's sake!

TORNABUONI: Knock down that cursèd door for me, you people! Will you soon have done?

CRIES OF ASSAILANTS: Victory! The place is open! Plunder! plunder!

The door falls; the crowd rushes into the house.

RIDOLFI: Take that creature!

TORNABUONI: No mercy for the Valori! Remember the Medici!

The wife and her child are taken prisoners

THE WIFE: Mercy! Mercy! My husband is absent, I swear it!

RIDOLFI: But I have got *you*! On your knees! wretch, on your knees! Kill that wolf's whelp!

The woman utters fearful cries; she is seized by the hair and stabbed on her child's body.

VALORI (running up): What are they doing? My God! What are you doing? My wife! my nephew! . . . Ridolfi! murderer!

RIDOLFI (piercing him with his sword): Here's for your insults!

Valori falls; he is killed, and the populace, with shouts, drags his corpse on the pavement.

The interior of the convent of San Marco.—The cloisters; the monks Fra Girolamo; the howling mob invades the courtyard.

FRA GIROLAMO: What do they want?

FRA BUONVICINI: To take you! I will not leave your side.

FRA GIROLAMO: But what harm have I done them? They loved me yesterday! No matter! Resist, my children!

FRA SACROMORO: Enough of imperilling the convent. You are our shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for his flock.

FRA GIROLAMO: Yes! you are right. I will go to my death. Ungrateful people, what do you want?

AN OPTIMIST: The Signiory merely asks you to give yourself up. We don't intend doing you any harm.

A hail of stones is thrown at Fra Girolamo.

A COMPAGNACCO (striking him with his fist): Prophesy who is striking you!

ANOTHER: There! Take this kick, too!

A third twists his fingers; he utters a cry

A WOMAN: Ah, the coward, he's crying!

AN ARRABBIATO: Come along! The Eight are asking for you!

FRA GIROLAMO: I'm coming! Don't injure my brothers! Ah, Florence! All is over!

A room in the Palazzo Vecchio.—The commissaries of the Pope, Romolino, and Father Torriano, general of the Dominicans; the Gonfalonier Piero Popoleschi.

POPOLESCHI: We have done all for the best, and we hope that His Holiness will be satisfied.

ROMOLINO: That remains to be seen.

POPOLESCHI: We have had Fra Girolamo condemned to the stake and to be hanged afterwards. What more do you want? His two acolytes, Fra Silvestre and Fra Buonvicini, will suffer the same penalty. Not gentle measures! Finally, the chief Piagnoni are either exiled or fined; Pagolantonio Soderini is fined three thousand florins, and Ser Niccolò

Machiavelli, who is as poor as Job, two hundred and fifty. I do not know what more can be expected of us.

ROMOLINO: You have taken some time to atone for your errors, Signor Gonfalonier.

POPOLESCHI: What do you expect? We had to please the people and howl with the wolves. When the wind changed, we were delighted to go in the right direction, and you see what we have done.

ROMOLINO: It's not so bad. Now, to work! We are charged with examining your way of procedure in Fra Girolamo's trial, but, whatever we find out, we shall make a good fire, because I bear with me the condemnation. Bring in the witnesses.

The monks of San Marco are brought in.

Good-day, good-day, my Fathers. You know what tne culprit has dared. You have seen him at work. Explain yourselves. Is he justly condemned? I ask the one who has been pointed out to me as the most honest. Father Malatesta Sacromoro, come forward!

FRA SACROMORO: Monsignore, for seven years we have believed what Fra Girolamo taught. He was our Vicar-General. He abused his authority over our minds.

ROMOLINO: At any rate, you are thoroughly convinced of that, from now on?

FRA SACROMORO: Profoundly.

ROMOLINO: This is a worthy man. So, my friend, you consider the counts of the indictment perfectly authentic.

FRA SACROMORO: Certainly, Monsignore.

ROMOLINO: In your opinion, it is with reason that Fra Girolamo and his accomplices have been condemned by the justice temporal?

FRA SACROMORO: I see no objection.

ROMOLINO: I commend your candour and the spirit of truth that animates you. Withdraw, my friend; let the culprits be brought in.

The soldiers bring Fra Girolamo, Fra Silvestre, and Fra Buonvicini, bound with cords

ROMOLINO: Fra Girolamo, you are aware that your most reverend General and myself represent His Holiness, the Pope, here, and that we are sufficiently cognisant of all your impostures. It would avail you nothing to tell us falsehoods. Make any statement you wish in your defence.

FRA GIROLAMO: For seven years I have preached in this city. I have done my best to establish in it morality and the love of God. I may often have been mistaken. I am only a poor human being, and as such I have erred; but I have aimed at nothing but good.

ROMOLINO: You are impudent! You have lied like a devil! Your own depositions bear witness to that, and it is an excess of insolence to come here and use such language as you do!

FRA GIROLAMO: My flesh is weak and does not support my soul. I confess it with tears: I have sinned against truth in declaring on the rack what is not true. I am unable to endure torture. But I disavow the words wrenched from me by pain.

ROMOLINO: Come, come, we are not your dupes! What you confessed is our property! We believe it! You are acting a part now!

FRA BUONVICINI: It is you who are insulting a saint! God will punish you!

FRA GIROLAMO: Alas, my toil, my pain, my labour, my desire to do good, have profited nothing! I wished to save the faith; I have failed! My illusions are shattered. I have followed will-o'-the-wisps. Better that I should die—I have long yearned for death.

ROMOLINO: This is past all bearing! Let this obstinate man be put to the torture again, otherwise he will do nothing but contradict us.

The torturers seize Fra Girolamo.

On the Palazzo square.—The scaffold. A flying plank-bridge leads from the Ringhiera to the platform of the stake.—A crowd ; a number of children are sharpening sticks with knives.

A CITIZEN : We have a good hour to wait, believe me. I know our Governors' way. They don't trouble themselves in the least to gratify us. Oh, that we were still under the ægis of Lorenzo the Magnificent or his illustrious house!

SECOND CITIZEN : I think we shall have to come back to that some day.

FIRST WOMAN : Oh, what a pretty child! Is he yours, Monna Teresa?

SECOND WOMAN : Yes, my dear. He's my eldest.

FIRST WOMAN : Kiss me, cherub! Look at his lovely black hair! What are you doing there with your pretty playmates?

THE CHILD : We are giving our sticks a good sharp point.

SECOND CITIZEN : And what for, little monkey?

THE CHILD : To prick Fra Girolamo's feet and legs when he comes past on the bridge. We shall stand underneath, and zing! zing!

Laughter.

FIRST WOMAN : Little mischiefs, indeed! Little mischiefs! Come and let me kiss you, darling! Isn't he a pretty child!

FIRST CITIZEN : Happy the state where childhood learns early to share in public sentiment!

ON THE SCAFFOLD.

Fra Girolamo, Fra Silvestre, Fra Buonvicini.—Fra Niccolini, confessor to Fra Girolamo.

FRA NICCOLINI (to Fra Girolamo) : I could not venture to speak of resignation to you, Father, who have prayed so much for this unhappy people!

FRA GIROLAMO : Give me your blessing!

BUONVICINI : May I suffer far more for the glory of God! Why not burn us before hanging us? It would be carrying out the letter of our sentence.

FRA GIROLAMO: My friend, my son, forget not that we have nothing to do save what is the will of Him Who is in the heavens!

FRA SILVESTRE: I will address this misguided mob!

FRA GIROLAMO: No, Silvestre, if you love me, not a syllable! . . . Poor Florence! . . . Poor Italy! . . . I would have given so much to save them! . . . Why do they make us wait like this?

CAPTAIN GIOVACCHINO: It's that brute the Bishop of Vaison, who, instead of coming to degrade you, as he is charged to do, goes on chatting with the commissaries!

The crowd before the stake and the gibbets.—Populace, monks, citizens, women, children.

A MAN: He was roundly tortured, the villain!

A WOMAN: What did they do to him?

A MAN: He received the strappado more than six times. That's tough—what? He's broken in every limb.

Laughter.

A CHILD: Well done!

A MERCHANT: You little rascal, they ought to do the same to you for having broken the mirrors in my shop a fortnight ago.

THE CHILD: Oh, I was told to break them, and so I broke them!

AN OLD WOMAN: The child's right! We've all been befooled by this brute, who condemned us to fast from one year's end to another!

AN ARTISAN: What fools we were! . . . Ah, he's climbing up the ladder! There he is at the top! . . . Aren't they going to burn him alive?

A GIRL: I hope they are. Tell me, signor soldier, isn't he to be burnt?

THE SOLDIER: He'll be hanged first, my pretty lass.

THE GIRL: Oh, what a pity! I've come such a long way to see the sight! Thank you, signor soldier.

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THE BURNING OF SAVONAROLA

THE SOLDIER: At your service, my beauty. You can come forward a bit, if you wish. Put yourself in front of me, there! . . . You'll be more comfortable.

THE GIRL: Quite true—come along, Mariana! No, please don't take hold of my waist like that! . . . Who are those two other men who are going up at Fra Girolamo's side?

A LOCKSMITH: What, you don't recognise them? I never missed a single one of their sermons, I assure you, during the time I was deceived! It is Fra Silvestre and Fra Buonvicini!

THE GIRL: How pale they are!

A BUTCHER: Ah, that's because they've been tortured also —serve them right!

THE GIRL: I implore you, signor soldier, let me go! . . . Tell me, rather, who are those two signors gesticulating on the stage.

THE SOLDIER: They are the Papal commissaries, my queen! . . . Their names are—— My word, I've forgotten their names! I'd much rather you told me where you live!

AN OLD LADY (with a dog in her arms): Is it true that the reverend Fra Girolamo was tortured with the pincers?

A CITIZEN: There is every reason to suppose so. At the same time, it may also be that I am mistaken, and am leading you astray, which, as you can believe, I should be very sorry to do.

THE OLD LADY: I am much obliged to you for your kindness. (The dog barks at the citizen.) Be quiet, my pet. Pardon him, messer; it's because he doesn't know you.

THE CITIZEN: That kind of quadruped usually does behave in that way. I am not offended, madam.

He moves off.

ON THE SCAFFOLD.

The three condemned men, the Bishop of Vaison, Dominican monks, executioners.

THE BISHOP: Fra Sebastiano, strip this man of the holy habit of your Order! . . . Take off everything! Leave him

only his shirt! Is it done? Good! . . . And now, Savonarola, I sever you from the Church militant and the Church triumphant!

SAVONAROLA: That last act is beyond your power!

THE BISHOP: Have his accomplices been stripped?

FRA SEBASTIANO: Yes, Monsignor, here they are in their shirts, like him.

THE BISHOP: He shall see them executed. Hangmen, to your work!

FRA SILVESTRE: *In manus tuas, Domine.**

He is hanged.

BUONVICINI: My turn, is it not? Farewell, Fra Girolamo!

SAVONAROLA: Farewell for a moment, you mean.

Buonvicini is hanged.

THE BISHOP: And now for you, arch-heretic!

Savonarola looks at the crowd; the executioners seize him.

IN THE SQUARE.

A CITIZEN (to his wife): It was rather a fine ceremony—imposing, even! But I think it's going to rain. . . . Let's go home.

THE WIFE: Yes, my love, let's go home. I'm afraid I might catch cold.

Messer Niccolò Machiavelli's house.—A room; Machiavelli is sitting at a table covered with piles of books and papers.—It is evening.—Twilight.

MACHIAVELLI: Poor Girolamo! . . . So they have finished with him! . . . They tracked him down for years, and at last they have run him to earth . . . surrounded . . . taken . . . killed him! It was the only possible ending! . . . The man lived in a dream! . . . He had built up for himself, from his earliest years, a poem of religion, purity, honour, wisdom, uprightness. Because he imagined the realisation of all these good and beautiful fancies to be possible, he took it for

* Into thy hands, O Lord.—Tr.

granted, and did not see that the less the world knows of such things, the more it talks about them. Poor Girolamo! Because he was innocent of all excessive passions, neither a gambler, nor a libertine, nor a miser, nor a spendthrift, nor a coxcomb, nor a clown, he thought the human beings around him perfectly capable of ridding themselves of all evil, and it never even entered his head that the greater part of his fellow-citizens, if not almost all . . . yes, my God! we may as well say all, with a few exceptions . . . are hewn like the idols of the Moabites, with eyes that see not and ears that hear not. There is no risk at all in displaying to them at leisure the whole stock of virtues. They will never understand what it all means, and will end by laughing like boobies. Poor Girolamo! To suppose that purity is anything but a mere abstraction, a special attribute of some few isolated souls! . . . And in consequence of this blunder, of this most serious blunder, he tried to establish in our midst the reign of peace, liberty and justice, for which we are paying by civil war, violation of rights, massacres, blood on the pavements of the streets, and your own death, Savonarola, and, what is more, the certain return of the Medici! This is the result of laying down false premisses and blinding oneself to the true nature of men. . . . Hapless creatures! For myself, I have never been more clear-sighted, and I now bid an everlasting fare-well to the illusions by which I was once spellbound. For a while my combinations of liberty and order led me astray. Piero Soderini had a juster vision. I stand corrected. But henceforth, in the name of heaven! what must we aim at? Is our poor Italy condemned to bear for ever the yoke of petty despots and street-corner tyrants? Is she a defenceless prey to the attacks of pitiless foreigners? Can one not conceive for her, without being guilty of foolish idealism, some higher fate than the shameful orgies in which we are wallowing? Italy, Italy, mother of so many great men, hearth of so many fires, rallying-point of so many forces! . . . If among the ruffians who drench us every day with blood there

were only a Sulla, an Octavius—in times of tumult, in epochs of convulsion like ours, such strokes of luck are normal, they are a part of the inevitable! Now who could be that Mahomet . . . that Tamerlane . . . that robber Saviour? A Sforza? . . . No! . . . they are empty sepulchres . . . A Gonzaga! . . . Still less! . . . A Malatesta . . . A Baglione . . . A Bentivoglio? . . . To lord it over a city by means of a few dozen cut-throats, they have no loftier ideal than that! . . . To murder, poison, betray, rise, fall . . . that is their lot! Always the same game. . . . But in the midst of this insolent and ferocious gang, I mark one nevertheless . . . . He is a whole head taller than the rest. . . . He has other and higher aims. He is no less perverse; he wants infinitely more, and that is an enormous advantage! What a singular and formidable being! Shrewd and cunning as the dragon, treacherous as the leopard, ambitious as the eagle, he is not afraid of shouting aloud in the face of our terror-stricken intriguers: *Aut Cæsar, aut nihil!** I should not be surprised if through all these crimes, and on the bleeding mass of disasters heaped up by the murderous rectitude of Girolamo, we were some day saved by the corrupt cleverness and audacity of Cesare Borgia! But what a noise! Oh, it's nothing. . . . It's Monna Marietta, my wife . . . She is scolding the maid. I am going out so as to avoid being scolded myself; I have other matters to consider.

END OF THE FIRST PART

* Either Cesare or nothing.—Tr.

SECOND PART

CESARE BORGIA

CESENA.

1502.

The esplanade before the citadel.—Tents ; military booths ; French and Italian men-at-arms.—Don Michele, captain of adventurers and intimate of Don Cesare Borgia, chatting with Mgr. Burchard, master of ceremonies to the Pope. They are walking up and down, their hands behind their backs.

DON MICHELE : While our master dictates his dispatches, let us withdraw, and I will inform you of what His Holiness desires to know.

MGR. BURCHARD : We may as well stay here. These Frenchmen do not understand a word of what we are saying.

DON MICHELE : You are right. We must not look too much as if we were seeking solitude and harbouring mysteries.

MGR. BURCHARD : Don Cesare seems lost, hopelessly lost! His condottieri, leagued against him, have taken his strongholds one after another! The Duchy of Urbino is in revolt ; the former prince has been received with acclamations by the very people who so joyfully hailed his departure. In a word, the worst has befallen you ; you cannot extricate yourself from the toils. Such is our view at Rome.

DON MICHELE : You forget a fundamental point. Whence comes our strength?

MGR. BURCHARD : Ah, you will tell me that Alexander VI. is behind you, that you are supported by his hand. But consider——

DON MICHELE : One word only! Alexander VI. made us a cardinal ; who made us a prince?

MGR. BURCHARD : Louis XII., King of France ; but he is withholding his protection from you, turning against you, even threatening you, we hear.

DON MICHELE : You fail to go beneath the surface. Why did Louis XII. show us favour?

MGR. BURCHARD : Because of the Cardinal d'Amboise.

DON MICHELE : Admirable! We promised d'Amboise the succession to Alexander ; we are still promising that. Besides,

we are useful people; our services have some weight, and, to go no further, the recent expeditions to the Milanese and to Naples are our work. God be praised, we proved at the sack of Capua that we were men of energy!

MGR. BURCHARD: The deuce you did! You spared nothing. But your happiness has withered like the grass of the fields; see how it is mown down by the very hand that sowed the seed.

DON MICHELE: You are mistaken. I have just come back from Milan with my Lord. Our affairs are set in order again; we are in higher favour than ever; my Lord spoke and acted so skilfully that there was no chance of being hard on us for our little peccadilloes.

MGR. BURCHARD: The Pope will be delighted with this news, but it should have come sooner. There is nothing left for you to save. While you were quenching the flames on the right, they gained ground on the left and consumed everything.

DON MICHELE: Come, come, Monsignor Burchard, don't always look on the seamy side of things like this!

MGR. BURCHARD: Your strongholds taken or in revolt!

DON MICHELE: Well, we shall re-take them.

MGR. BURCHARD: How? You have no more troops. The Orsini, the Duke of Gravina with Pagolo, had hired you out their companies; now they have changed sides and, from that very cause, here you are at loggerheads with all their house!

DON MICHELE: It's a nuisance. We shall have our work cut out. Above all, I regret Vitellozzo Vitelli; he is a great warrior! Nor do I console myself more easily for the defection of Oliverotto da Fermo. But all the same, I repeat, nothing is lost.

MGR. BURCHARD: You are not unaware that the Venetians have declared against you?

DON MICHELE: I know it only too well.

MGR. BURCHARD: The Aragonese are about to attack you.

DON MICHELE: That we must expect.

CESARE BORGIA

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MGR. BURCHARD: You have not a ducat left, and the Holy Father is not in a position to make you any advance.
DON MICHELE: We can, however, find ways and means by promises.
MGR. BURCHARD: The Florentines will not fail to join forces with your opponents.
DON MICHELE: There you are mistaken. A secretary of the Signiory has just arrived. When men negotiate, they do not strike.
MGR. BURCHARD: Holy Madonna! Have you seen this secretary?
DON MICHELE: I received him myself and shook hands with him. He is no phantom created by hope, but really one of our friends, Messer Niccolò Machiavelli.
MGR. BURCHARD: I am delighted to hear it! . . . But in reality, nothing can avail you, I see you are too far gone!
DON MICHELE: Allow me to show you things in a less gloomy light.
MGR. BURCHARD: You are certainly coolness incarnate, but I doubt whether the Pope considers you infallible.
DON MICHELE: If, like you, I only took into account the goodwill of Louis XII., the hundred lances furnished by that worthy Mgr. de Candalle—whom I see over there eating his clove of garlic like the true Gascon he is—the handful of Italian companies that remain to us, the shifty diplomacy of the Florentines and other odds and ends, I should perhaps share your anxiety. But you do not see, no, you do not grasp with both hands, as I do, our anchor of salvation!
MGR. BURCHARD: And what is that?
DON MICHELE: What is it? . . . The indomitable energy of the Duke of Valentinois. So long as I see him calm, self-possessed, unbending, terrible, I cannot feel the slightest doubt or fear.
MGR. BURCHARD: Don Cesare is a mighty brain, I admit. He has resources! There is certainly a great range in his astuteness. . . .

DON MICHELE: Better still, in his fearlessness! And that is a contagious virtue which he is able to inspire in his friends.
MGR. BURCHARD: A subtle politician he is—the subtlest of the subtle! I grant you the truth of that. But all the same, his affairs are going badly, so badly that he would perhaps be better advised to take refuge in Rome than to attempt the struggle against fate. That is the proposal I am charged by His Holiness to make.
DON MICHELE: Mention it to him, and in his smile you will read the meaning of scorn! So long as he stays upright, no shipwreck is possible. But if you trust me, let us end our walk and go in again. The Duke might notice our absence, and he is no lover of asides.
MGR. BURCHARD: I think you are right. When he is uneasy, he becomes, like the Pope, suspicious and dangerous even towards his friends.

In a house of the town.—A room serving as a study.—Don Cesare Borgia, Duke of Valentinois, is seated at a table with dispatches and letters.

DUKE (loudly): Admit Signor Machiavelli! Welcome, Messer Niccolò! What news from Florence?
MACHIAVELLI: Nothing but good, my lord.
DUKE: I am glad to hear it. Are you tired after your journey, or would you rather tell me at once the object of your mission? I have pressing business which compels me to lose no time.
MACHIAVELLI: With your Highness' permission, I will lay before you the message I am charged to bring.
DUKE: I will listen.
MACHIAVELLI: My lord, while you were at Milan with Louis XII. . . .
DUKE: I will tell you beforehand that the kindnesses promised me from that quarter vanished like smoke before my explanations.
MACHIAVELLI: Still your Highness had left in your States

picked troops to maintain order, and these troops were commanded by captains of great repute.

DUKE: It is important that military power should be entrusted to capable hands.

MACHIAVELLI: Unfortunately, these hands were more capable than loyal. Urged by the fear of seeing you grow too powerful and become the one man to be dreaded, your military chiefs sent word to our Signiory that they had resolved to turn their arms against you in alliance with Giovanni Bentivoglio of Bologna, Pandolfo of Siena, and other exiled princes. They asked for our alliance, offering to restore to us such territories and such towns as we should be pleased to specify.

DUKE: Your presence here, Messer Niccolò, is sufficient proof to me that the wisdom of the Florentines is not ensnared by such clumsy traps. Besides, the good faith of the Orsini and of the house of Vitelli is fairly well-known to you.

MACHIAVELLI: I am ordered to assure you, your Highness, that the Republic is not in the habit of betraying her allies; she is filled with respect for the Apostolic See, and you can count upon her fidelity. Besides, she hopes that you will not lend your ear to any proposal from the Venetians.

DUKE: That is a delicate point which we will discuss when more at leisure. There is no hurry. But, between ourselves, Messer Niccolò, between ourselves, could anyone show more heedlessness, more braggadocio, steeped in an enormous flood of folly, than my condottieri? To attack me—me! . . . And it never even entered their heads that they were offending the Pope, insulting Louis, and bringing down on themselves the Germans, with whom I am on the best possible terms! It is said again and again that the Aragonese wish me ill. I let it be believed, Machiavelli, I let it be believed! . . . These wretched rebel hirelings imagined, poor children, that consummate politicians like you Florentines would shut yourselves up with them in the terrible deadlock into which they have ventured, and all to receive a few miserable villages that cannot be kept! Frankly, it is

ridiculous to the last degree, nothing less! This raising of shields is so impotent that, I confess to you, I never thought for the moment that I was in the slightest peril.

MACHIAVELLI: The Signiory has not looked on things in quite the same light as your Highness. It has seen that you are henceforth without troops; that your captains, in detaching themselves from you, leave you disarmed, totally disarmed; that your men, who have only belonged to you for a few months, quit you without a pang and even, in some places, with unconcealed joy. You are in the good books of the French; you tell me so, I believe it, and moreover I have seen troops of their nation hereabouts marching with yours. His Holiness, too, will not fail you, that is quite probable, yet perhaps he will find it all he can do to defend his own self in Rome against the agitations of the Orsini and the Vitelli. You think you are on friendly terms with the Germans and even with the Aragonese; that is in any case quite a novelty, and we might have reasons for being of a different opinion. And surely, my lord, suppose that your captains, instead of losing their time in parleys in the Perugian country, in arguing, counter-arguing and talking wildly—if Pagolo, Vitellozzo, Oliverotto, the Gravina, the Petrucchi, the Baglioni and the rest had simply seized your person while you were alone, undefended, off your guard at Imola, it is not easy to see how you would have freed yourself from the imbroglio. This is the view taken at Florence, and this is why it was thought that our help would not be inopportune; but if the friendship of our noble signors has taken a wrong road here and has troubled itself to no purpose, you will surely excuse the act for the intention.

DUKE: We will talk with absolute openness! Nothing could be more acceptable to me than your coming, and you will thank those who sent you on my behalf. At Imola the other day I was not so embarrassed as you appear to imagine. Believe me, I had more than one string to my bow. I possessed not only the means of saving myself, but the certainty of triumph.

The situation, however, I will not deny, was in some respects other than I could have wished. From now onwards all has changed. The arbiter, the master, is myself! My dear Machiavelli, do you wish a project to come to grief? Then have it carried out by a coalition. All a single individual's concentration of will is only just enough to accomplish that difficult thing, an action. Now they have formed a party to plot against me; my advantage over them is that I have only myself to decide on my line of defence. Here I am at the head of a strong body of Italian cavalry, which they have given me time to get together, of five hundred French lancers which they have given me time to summon, and, what is far more precious, I have the friendship of the Florentines which they have given time to ripen. You are not rescuing me, certainly, but you are serving me at a most suitable juncture.

MACHIAVELLI: The noble Signiory will consider the punishment of the perjurors as well-earned, however severe it may be.

DUKE: There is no question of anything of that sort. In some cases, clemency is imperative. Not that one can have any scruple about punishing notorious traitors and murderers like Vitellozzo and Oliverotto; Italy is weltering in blood from their crimes. Nevertheless, my intentions are most conciliatory. . . . Bautista! . . . Yes. . . . Conduct the Signor Secretary to my chamberlain. Let him be given good lodging and all that he can desire. Messer Niccolò is my particular friend.

BAUTISTA: Yes, your Highness.

MACHIAVELLI: You overwhelm me with kindness, my lord.

DUKE: Farewell.

DUKE (alone): Those Florentines! . . . They are most timely in coming to my aid! . . . But if I do not take care, they will soon have twisted their service into a halter to strangle me at the proper place and time. Their sudden friendship is only

the outcome of their hatred towards the Orsini. They consider me less solid and therefore less dangerous than that ancient house. . . . A mushroom has no roots and never grows so high as an oak. . . . and they take me for a mushroom! From this day forth I shall have to distrust Florence more than I ever did! . . . Ho, Giovan-Maria!

GIOVAN-MARIA: What is your Highness' pleasure?

DUKE: Go and see where Don Michele and Mgr. Burchard are. Ask them to come and speak to me.

GIOVAN-MARIA: The two gentlemen are awaiting your good pleasure.

DUKE: Then let them come in!

Enter Don Michele and Mgr. Burchard.

Our affairs are going better, but not so well that the danger does not continue to be tremendous.

MGR. BURCHARD: The Florentines have sent an envoy to your Highness. Are you assured in that quarter?

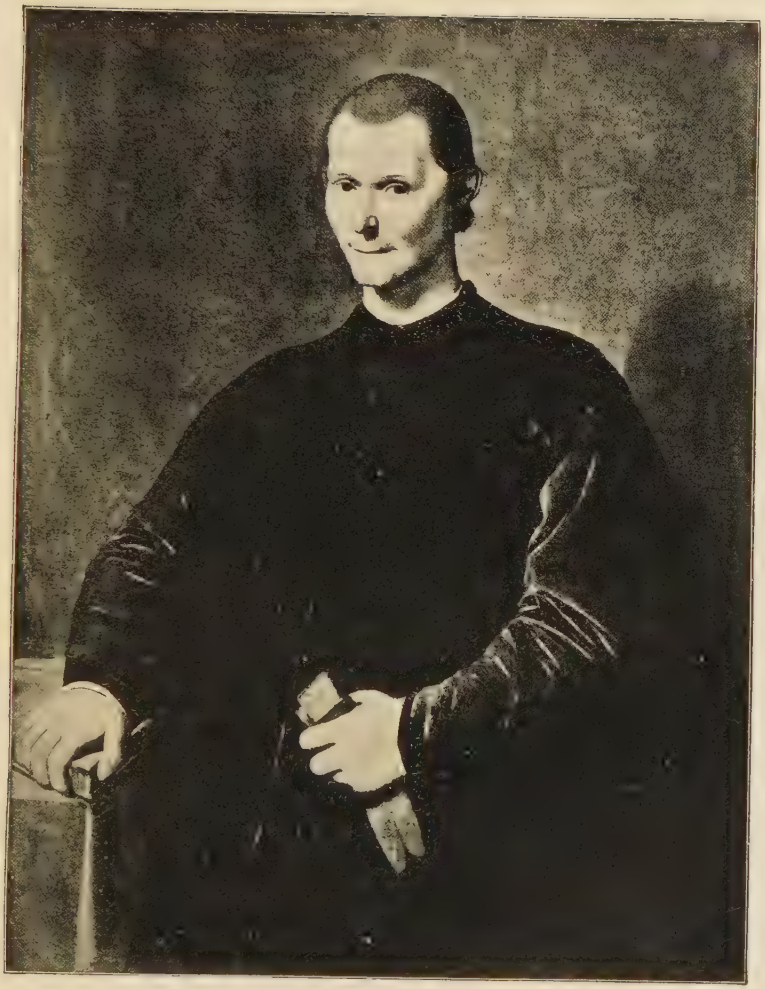
DUKE: Sufficiently; and on that foundation we are going to build. You, Burchard, go straight to Bologna; do not return to Rome to the Holy Father until I send you back. At Bologna, you will find out what might induce Giovanni Bentivoglio to break off from the league. You, Michele, will go to the condottieri, and . . . here are the instructions which I had just written when this Florentine arrived. You will not fail to dazzle their eyes with the new alliance, and you will make all the use you can of this weapon.

DON MICHELE: I will do my best, your Highness.

DUKE: Both of you will write to me as soon as you have succeeded in merely gaining a hearing. An adversary who discusses is not resolute. He must be put down sooner or later. Go! If I weather this storm, the most violent that has ever assailed me, I shall remain master of all the Romagna.

DON MICHELE: No, my lord, of all Italy!

DUKE: Possibly. I really cannot say which would please me better—to reign over so fair an empire, to drive out every single one of these wretched Gaulish and German barbarians;



NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

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or to hang these dukes, princes and podestás of the ancient mould. Fools that they are, they have not an inkling of the necessities of the new age! They riddle me with their insults as a Spanish bull is riddled by the banderillos!

DON MICHELE: All happiness will come to you at one stroke, perfect as heavenly bliss! I kiss your Highness' hands.

MGR. BURCHARD: And I, too.

DUKE: Go! Neither of you spare the couriers!

SINIGAGLIA.

The condottieri's camp.—The tent of the council of war. Around a large table are seated Vitellozzo Vitelli, Oliverotto da Fermo, Signor Pagalo Orsini, the Duke of Gravina, captains of adventurers.

GRAVINA: Peace! No quarrelling! We have all been right, we have all been wrong, and myself the first. We ought to have taken Cesare when we had him in our power at Imola, and killed him. But to split now would be an even greater blunder.

PAGOLO (striking the table with his fist): And I, I tell you that nothing is even compromised! By God! we command ten thousand soldiers, and a few sorry French lancers won't frighten a man of my house.

OLIVEROTTO: I am of your opinion; I occupy the advanced posts with my company, five hundred horse and a thousand archers. Let the Borgia think of testing me, he'll have a warm welcome!

VITELLOZZO: These are fine tirades, but the cold truth is that we have done nothing of what we schemed. The Valentinois is alive, and he ought to be rotting at this moment under six feet of earth. But he is not! We have talked instead of acting, and our enemy is laughing at us. The Bentivoglio, who promised us his aid, turns a deaf ear; Guidubaldo accepts congratulations at Urbino, and does nothing. The Florentines have not even sent us an answer. For my part, I assure you, I prophesy a very black future!

PAGOLO: Shall I be frank? You weary me with your jeremiads. When free-lances have their cuirass on their back and their sword at their side, such doleful looks are contemptible.

VITELLOZZO: All your violence and bragging does not alter the real position in the slightest. When you are hanged, broken on the wheel, or poisoned, much good your rash valour will have done you!

GRAVINA: Peace, peace, my friends! Would it not be better to discuss, in perfect calmness, what had best be done?

VITELLOZZO (rising and walking agitatedly across the room, his hands raised to heaven): Heavens, how blind men are! With what an impetus do they rush to their ruin! What frenzy has seized us, that we throw ourselves in all lightness of heart into so ill-planned an enterprise?

OLIVEROTTO: Bah! nothing was more reasonable or more necessary. We are in the pay of the Valentinois, true; but with what object? He is allowed to hold the lands we have conquered, lands that we wish to occupy and to rule. That is the view we have taken. We command our troops; they need pay, which he supplies. Nothing simpler! But *we* are the real masters; I will not suffer him to give himself airs of forgetting that and expect to play the monarch. That's the gist of the matter.

PAGOLO: I agree. You talk like a bishop, Oliverotto. Money and pleasure for our men, pleasure and money for us, and the whole world may go to the devil! Captains of free-lances must look for, desire and put up with no other system.

OLIVEROTTO: And we have a thousand times had grounds to be angry at seeing this Valentinois aim at his interests and not ours. What? He wants to govern? To play the prince, the real prince?

VITELLOZZO: It's certain that he cuts his officers' throats when they plunder the peasant for themselves and not for him.

PAGOLO: His officers—yes, he is their master; but he dared to utter the most outrageous threats against me regarding

the firing of a village! A Cesare Borgia! A man of no account, a low fellow from the gutter, who aims at becoming a petty Sforza!

GRAVINA: Sforza, at any rate, was a condottiere, if he was not a gentleman.

OLIVEROTTO: Ah, you are very far out as to Alexander VI.'s bastard! Well, I don't care a fig for what he is or is not. No sceptre, no law! Our good pleasure, that's enough! Our best course is not to abandon our plans.

VITELLOZZO: And your plans—what are they?

PAGOLO: Our plans, great Heavens! . . . are our plans. To reduce the Valentinois to the position of lackey, nothing less. If he resists, he'll be broken—there are our plans!

VITELLOZZO: Agreed; but they have failed. You have shown neither decision, nor firmness, nor promptitude.

OLIVEROTTO: May the devil choke you!

GRAVINA: I implore you, be calm, be calm! Let us be in harmony. Come, let us make some resolution, however trifling!

Enter an Officer.

THE OFFICER: Your Excellencies, the Captain Don Michele has come from the camp of the Valentinois. He would like to be shown into your presence.

PAGOLO: Oh, Michele? Little Michele? He's a worthy fellow!

VITELLOZZO: Yes, his master's creature!

GRAVINA: I am curious to know what he can have to say to us.

VITELLOZZO: If you listen to him, he will worm his way into your confidence, piling falsehoods on falsehoods, as in days of old the Titans mounted to the heavens by heaping Pelion upon Ossa. I am all against admitting him.

OLIVEROTTO: I entirely disagree. Bring in Don Michele.

Michele enters and embraces the four captains one after the other.

DON MICHELE: Greeting, greeting, noble Signors, worthy,

excellent gentlemen. I am delighted to see you all in such fine fettle.

CAPTAINS: Thanks, Don Michele! You are in the same case, it seems?

DON MICHELE: Oh, much tormented, I assure you! Since you and he have appeared no longer to agree, my Lord is very downcast and makes us lead a most melancholy existence.

PAGOLO: Plague take your Lord! He's a man of no faith!

DON MICHELE: How so, pray?

PAGOLO: Is it not clear that he wants to play the despot? When he has made himself one with our aid, we shall have on our hands all the powers of Italy, while our most dangerous adversary will be the very man who, owing everything to us, will make his peace at our expense?

DON MICHELE: As I did not come here to dandle you with illusions, nor to reply at random to fancied charges, let us have method in our discussion, I beg you. To begin with you, Signor Pagolo, what is the meaning of your complaints? Is not your pay issued regularly, even before it falls due?

PAGOLO: I——

DON MICHELE: Pardon me, my good, my worthy Pagolo! You shall soon answer me as you wish, all that you wish and as lengthily as you please; but first, you must know whom you have to deal with in me; that is why I have to explain myself. I am a man who is frank, sincere, loyal; I am simple, I indulge in no fine phrases. I swear it by the genuine love I bear you, and by my eternal salvation, which I hope not to lose! Why then should I tell you anything which is not scrupulously true? Have confidence in me, all four of you, and let me speak to you from the fulness of my heart! No, Pagolo, no, my comrade, the Duke has not done you the slightest wrong; on the contrary, he has favoured and honoured you particularly, and he does the same to the houses of Orsini and Vitelli. Accordingly, what I say in your case, I vouch for equally on behalf of these other

captains. So far as the past is concerned, you can make no reproach against my master.

OLIVEROTTO: I beg a thousand pardons, Michele, but——

DON MICHELE: Patience, patience! Let me finish! In the past, I repeat, no shadow has crossed your path; but what of the future? Ah, you fear the future? You imagine the Duke so ambitious to reign alone that he might have occasion to ignore your services?

GRAVINA: That would not be impossible.

VITELLOZZO: I, for my part, should not be surprised.

DON MICHELE: Well, I should be very much surprised if he did. Apart from all questions of ingratitude, it would be so ridiculous and undiplomatic. . . . Let us consider. The Duke is supported by the French?

OLIVEROTTO: Supported? It is they who created him from the slime, as God created Adam!

DON MICHELE: Yes, but what did Adam do? He at once plotted against God, because we never love our creator; he is too humiliating a master. Do you understand that?

VITELLOZZO: To defend himself against the French, he reckons on the Pope.

DON MICHELE: And does he also reckon on the immortality of the Pope? Will Alexander VI. live for ever? Do we guarantee you that? No! So, according to you, when his Holiness goes down to his grave, we are agreed to go and bury ourselves there too? You are mistaken, we want to live, and in order to live and to reign, we reckon on you and on no other!

PAGOLO: This is something new.

DON MICHELE: I am, perhaps, too open, and I beg you in any case not to repeat my words to the Valentinois. They must remain between ourselves. What I tell you is absolutely correct. We desire and we seek no other friends but you! Because, to reveal to you all that I think, there will assuredly come a time when we shall have to break with the Florentines, however well we may stand with them for the present.

THE FOUR CAPTAINS (all together): What are you saying? You stand well with the Florentines? Are you certain?

DON MICHELE: Why, one of their secretaries, Messer Niccolò Machiavelli, is with us at this moment. It is easy to prove it to you, and . . . .

PAGOLO: Why do you pause? Come, Michele, no reticence! We have always been friends!

DON MICHELE: No! I must not tell you what I had on the tip of my tongue. I let myself go too far with you. You will not fail to repeat to the Valentinois something of what I say. However little it may be, it will already be too much for my security. No . . . let us change our line of discussion. . . . Don't press me, I beg. . . . It is my ruin you are compassing. . . . Once more, a hundred times, no! . . . My friends, I implore you, let us come to an understanding! . . . I will relate you one detail . . . . one only. . . . You swear to me to be discreet?

THE FOUR CAPTAINS: On our honour and on all the Gospels!

DON MICHELE: God! How wrong I was to let myself go! . . . From Messer Niccolò we learnt the proposals of alliance you made to the Florentines. They have sent the Valentinois your very letters, and offer money and troops; they have written to Giovanni Bentivoglio that if he should have the misfortune to keep his word to you, they would at once take action against him. That is what I confide to you. . . . You shall know no more, not if you ask me till to-morrow. Besides, all this is most painful for me!

VITELLOZZO: I don't see what it is that troubles you so. The Bolognese, according to you, are betraying us; the Florentines are Judases, you have at your heels a whole regiment of men-at-arms; are you making game of us with your airs and graces?

DON MICHELE: And in six months, what will become of us? There is no doubt that, with so many opponents to

encounter, you will be crushed in a few days from now. All the cities detest you, and should you turn Spaniards, your roads are cut off. But we? What will happen to us in the hands of so many protectors? Oh, you did very wrong to rebel! It is just a case for quoting the fable of Menenius.

PAGOLO: Well, the harm is done now.

VITELLOZZO: If they had listened to me!

OLIVEROTTO: You are joking, Messer Vitellozzo! You were the most furious of us all.

VITELLOZZO: I'd have you know that you must not take such a haughty tone with me. You forget yourself.

GRAVINA: Gentleness! Harmony! Pray don't let us quarrel!

DON MICHELE: Indeed, you have quarrelled quite enough! What is wanted now is agreement.

VITELLOZZO: The past is past. We should have perhaps done more wisely in keeping quiet; but there is no greater folly than to let ourselves be hoodwinked. I know Signor Borgia's wheedlings! I know them! I know them! In the whole world he sees neither friends nor enemies, but only puppets, and not one has ever been set in motion by him without being eventually broken.

DON MICHELE: Perhaps you are right; in that case, declare war upon him! On one side, there are the Pope, the King of France, the Florentines; to-morrow, the Bolognese; the day after to-morrow, all the cities, all the communes, all the factions, all the lords of the Romagna, including your comrade Petruccio of Siena and even Giampagolo Baglione of Perugia. On the other, I see the houses of Vitelli and Orsini; moreover, we must remember that the wisest members of the houses are at Rome, under the thumb of the Pope. Perhaps you will succeed.

PAGOLO: Only a week ago we beat your troops at Fossombrone.

DON MICHELE: Well, go on beating us.

OLIVEROTTO: Supposing for a moment that we felt

disposed to come to terms, would you have a reasonable proposal to make to us? I mean, a proposal which would secure our being sheltered, absolutely, completely sheltered against the rancour of the most rancorous of men?

DON MICHELE: I cannot imagine what risk you could run, being, as I see, at the head of your own troops. You have no intention of parting with them, I suppose?

GRAVINI: Certainly not! But you have troops also, and if, through misplaced confidence, we let ourselves be taken by surprise. . . .

DON MICHELE: In that case, I repeat, it is we who should be at the mercy of our foreigners, and I thought I had made you realise how little that was to our liking. Then, too, what you have done has not vexed the Duke so much as you seem to imagine. He did not think himself in great danger; he clearly perceived that you had spared him at Imola; besides, he knows of old the hostile feelings of the Florentines towards your families. At bottom, he looks upon your conduct as a sheer piece of folly on the part of honest but imprudent soldiers. You are not obliged, gentlemen, to be profound and far-seeing statesmen. Do you want bigger pay, a brilliant court, gay ceremonies, good cheer? Then come back to us; we receive you with open arms. Above all, don't cherish wild notions; you are not by a long way such culprits as you fear! . . . Now, while you are making up your minds, I confess to you I should like some supper. . . .

PAGOLO: I will take you to my quarters, if you like.

DON MICHELE: No, no, don't put yourself out for my sake. Continue your deliberations; anyone will show me the way.

GRAVINA: Pagolo can accompany you. We shall have time to speak of all these matters this evening or to-morrow morning. Enough of brain-racking for one sitting.

VITELLOZZO: I must admit that my brain is bursting; I can't stand any more.

DON MICHELE: Ah, my dear signors, my friends, my good friends, you will not forget your promises, will you? You will

not reveal to the Duke the indiscretions I have been guilty of? I let my tongue run away with me, you know, rather rashly, but without evil intention, Heaven is my witness!

THE FOUR CAPTAINS: Rest assured, we shall tell nothing, old fox!

CESENA.

Cesare Borgia's study.—The Duke, several confidential agents, couriers and secretaries. Some are rapidly writing dispatches, the others standing up around their master.

DUKE: No post?

A SECRETARY: No, your Highness, not yet.

DUKE: Let me know as soon as one arrives. We must lose no time. Antonio, are you ready?

ANTONIO: Yes, your Highness, my horse is at the door.

DUKE: Go and visit for me the peasants of the Apennine. Address yourself, for choice, to the Cerroni, and, among these, to the Ravagli families. If the Rinaldi are willing to listen to you, you will of course receive them cordially; but I have more hold over the others. In short, don't overlook anyone, and make me as many friends as you can.

ANTONIO: Yes, my lord.

DUKE: Promise money, promise freedom, promise above all vengeance and the sacking of towns which, by not submitting at once, would compel me to take them by assault.

ANTONIO: Yes, my lord. The peasant is very fond of sacking towns.

DUKE: Let him have his way. Take care to coax the barons who are popular with the country-folk, and bring over to our side as many as you can.

ANTONIO: I know them all, and if I offer them the prospect of overthrowing the free-lances. . . .

DUKE: Do your best, I give you a free hand. Go. Now for you, Alfonso!

ALFONSO: Here I am, my lord.

DUKE: Go to Forlì. I must win over the Guelphs there, and,

to that end, offer them my protection against the Ghibellines. As the latter are the stronger, let us attract to our side those who are most in need of alliance. You will do the same on your way at Faenza and at Ravenna, but just the reverse at Rimini, where the Guelphs dominate. There you will work above all upon the Ghibellines. Now go! You others, have you your instructions?

SEVERAL AGENTS: Yes, my lord.

THE DUKE: Go then! and succeed!

Exeunt agents.

You, Martino, I will send you to Urbino. This is what you must do to have Guidubaldo killed or banished for me. Listen carefully.

On the glacis.—The French archers and the men-at-arms play at nine-pins and leap-frog.

A man-at-arms is walking with two archers, at the same place where Don Michele and Mgr. Burchard were walking.

MAN-AT-ARMS: I tell you the Eyquem are one of the good families of Bordeaux, and when the father bought the castle of Montaigne, everyone said: "All the better, it's a good stock!"

FIRST ARCHER: Yes, but not one of the first of the town. The Lestonnac are far more ancient!

SECOND ARCHER: They may be ancient, but the Colombi are still older. That's what I always heard my father say.

THIRD ARCHER: I have nothing against that. It seems that they had mayors and judges of their name in the time of the English rule!

MAN-AT-ARMS: So I was assured. Those were good times, those of the English! The town paid no imposts, there was no salt-tax, and wine cost next to nothing.

SECOND ARCHER: Are you going to turn Englishman now?

MAN-AT-ARMS: So help me God! I should turn what I

please, so long as I was allowed to go back to Milan, where I left a little girl who didn't mind being kissed.

THIRD ARCHER: The fact is, there's no fun at all here; we get hardly any fighting, and it bores one to death to see from morn till night the yellow faces of these beggarly Italians. They are people with no idea of enjoying themselves! They don't understand a word of French, they don't drink, they don't dance, they have just about as much wit as my horse!

SECOND ARCHER: Now then, Jeannot, cheer up, my lad! Here! Here's something to put you in good spirits again!

He throws Jeannot's cap to the ground; the archers and the men-at-arms jostle and fight with loud laughter.

SINIGAGLIA.

The free-lances' camp.—The tent of Pagolo Orsini.—Pagolo has just supped with Don Michele.—Lackeys clear the table and withdraw.

DON MICHELE: You are all overheated, and none of you sees things as they are. The Duke is not the gentlest man on earth, it is true, but neither is he the rashest, and that is why he does not care to be hard on you and lose what you are worth to him.

PAGOLO: If we listen to him, we are lost! You will never convince me to the contrary. Vitellozzo is not wrong on that point.

DON MICHELE: Vitellozzo is an ass who fancies himself a lion, because he uses a knife better than anyone else. It is a pretty talent, but not everything. Let us come back to business. You think then that the Duke wishes you no good?

PAGOLO: Yes, I do!

DON MICHELE: Here is the proof. He sends you this chain.

PAGOLO: The deuce! Rubies and sapphires! a pretty setting! Florentine work! Was I mistaken?

DON MICHELE: For a soldier you have a cultivated taste.

PAGOLO: That's just like you, you courtiers! You imagine

that no one but yourselves has the right to love the divine Muses and understand real beauty. If this chain is not the work of Robetta, which would greatly astonish me, I'll wager you my Venus, the most perfect picture of Guido of Bologna, against your glass of Guillaume of Marseilles, that it's from the workshop of Giovanni di Goro!

DON MICHELE: The glass is yours, for this chain is actually by Robetta. We know at court how to choose things, you'll admit!

PAGOLO: How is Count Castiglione?

DON MICHELE: Still a loyal servant of the Orsini house.

PAGOLO: We approve of him for such sentiments. But I'm tired out. A whole day on horseback, visiting the guard-houses! What a nuisance these misunderstandings are! Let us go to bed; what say you?

DON MICHELE: What say I? I'm nearly dropping off!

PAGOLO: If you write to the Duke this evening, do not fail to assure his Highness that he has been quite misled as regards me. . . . No, after all, don't tell him anything! . . . I would not have him imagine. . . .

DON MICHELE: Oh, you big baby! I'll tell him you are his friend, as he is yours. Good-night!

CESENA.

The Valentinois' study.—Don Cesare Borgia; Machiavelli; Bautista.

BAUTISTA: A dispatch, my lord.

DUKE: Well, give it me. Messer Niccolò, I do not wish the Signiory of Florence to be ignorant of any detail of my dispute with my condottieri. This is what Don Michele writes.

He gives the dispatch to Machiavelli, who reads it.

You see that Pagolo Orsini is on the way to pacify and lead back his comrades. Vitellozzo resists; still, he will go with the others . . . he will come like the others. . . . I shall have him there, in my hands, Messer Niccolò, like the others!

MACHIAVELLI: I see clearly, your Highness. He will come—they will all come. Every moment their hearts sink lower, and their heads . . . oh, their heads are already gone! I see that they propose that you should join them so as to make war upon us.

DUKE: They don't know what to invent next! . . . Foreseeing my refusal, they offer me a fresh combination.

MACHIAVELLI: To take Sinigaglia and give it you?

DUKE: I shall answer by telling them to summon the place to surrender and that I am coming to their aid, and I will go.

MACHIAVELLI: Have you enough followers to be secure in the hands of these men?

DUKE: Enough followers? . . . I let them know (for it was they who were afraid) that I was going to dismiss all my troops except M. de Candalle's company and a small number of Italian dragoons. I have kept my word. All left an hour ago.

MACHIAVELLI: You are going to imperil yourself like this, my Lord?

DUKE: There are moments when the safest spot on earth is in front of the lion's jaws! Some day you will understand that. You are still young.

MACHIAVELLI: I am curious to know what an air you will assume towards these traitors.

DUKE: Nothing but gentleness, Messer Niccolò, nothing but clemency! You smile?

MACHIAVELLI: I am smiling, your Highness, at the want of agreement between the honey of your words and the fire of your glances.

DUKE: Politics are great matters, Messer Niccolò, and must not be faced lightly. What is this, Bautista?

BAUTISTA: A note, my lord.

DUKE (reading): Ah, our game is going well! The Bentivoglio offers me his friendship and a family alliance.

MACHIAVELLI: All the same, Signor Giovanni is not much inclined to domestic affections.

DUKE: He is a man of action. One night he had a fine skirmish with a pack of opponents: two hundred hounds at a single blow. That cannot fail to bring glory to a young boar. But these men of the ancient families always betray the degenerate in some point or other. It is not enough to be able to stab or make others stab. The Bentivoglio lacks brains, and has never been able to keep a coherent idea in his head. . . . See, he is breaking away from my free-lances!

MACHIAVELLI: You have made good headway this week.

DUKE: Not bad! Don't let us stop in the middle of the road. Let us march straight, firmly and quickly. They are sounding to horse. We shall start at once for Sinigaglia.

MACHIAVELLI (pensively): It is most probable . . . most probable . . . those men are mad enough to expect you.

DUKE: What, expect me? They'll come to meet me, never doubt! Fate either leads man or drags him. I have fooled them twenty times, deceived them a hundred times. They know how little secondary considerations weigh with me. Yet look at them! How their reason totters more and more

every moment! The Florentines do not want them. Yesterday morning their friend Guidubaldo took alarm at the fierceness of my challenges, and fled from Urbino. Now the Bentivoglio is turning his back on them. Don Michele is working them; he makes Gravina dizzy with arguments, Vitellozzo with flatteries, Pagolo with presents, Oliverotto with dark threats and secret promises; he entangles them all together in a mesh of protestations, and—a miracle, this, but it has occurred before, and will occur again—although these four roysterers know exactly what to make of my advances and my pity, they will come, they will come, I tell you, and run to throw themselves at my feet. Nothing can save them. Heaven and their characters will it so.

MACHIAVELLI (stroking his chin): The world is really an interesting study.

DUKE: Come, we have rambled enough. To horse! We shall stop at Fano. I suppose it is there that my opponents will come to beg my mercy.

MACHIAVELLI: At your orders, my lord.

SINIGAGLIA.

The tent of the Orsini.—Pagolo, Vitellozzo, Vitelli.

VITELLOZZO: The town is taken; but the castle will not agree to surrender to anyone but the Valentinois in person. Shall I tell you what I think?

PAGOLO: Yes.

VITELLOZZO: The rogue of a Governor has been instigated by the Duke himself to take this step. He has an understanding with the Borgia.

PAGOLO: You scent trickery everywhere; perhaps you are right. But what are we to do? Since we have returned to the Borgia's pay, we cannot discuss such matters.

VITELLOZZO: The result will be that having stipulated with Michele that we should remain in our camp and he in his, we shall find ourselves under his claws—for he will certainly come.

PAGOLO: That is clear. I console myself by reflecting that this critical situation cannot last long. I confess I am anxious; I would rather know at once what course to take. I hope the Duke has none but good intentions.

VITELLOZZO: What are the grounds for your hope?

PAGOLO: What leads you to think he will quarrel straight away with the four leading condottieri of Italy? Our support, our protection is worth gold. Our heads, once cut off, would be worth nothing. Then, we have at our backs those two great, illustrious, powerful houses of the Vitelli and the Orsini, the most splendid in the Romagna, and therefore in the whole world. How many cardinals, bishops and lords are there whom it would do no good to provoke!

VITELLOZZO: Once I am murdered it will matter little to me whether the murderer has made a blunder.

PAGOLO: Bah, rashness lies in anticipating everything! Let us swim with the stream: with skill we shall be able to cut across and reach the bank.

VITELLOZZO: I can only say that I feel sick at heart.

PAGOLO: Well, then it is you who will die—not I, who have confidence.

Trumpets.—Enter Gravina, Oliverotto and Don Michele.

GRAVINA: To horse! Our squadrons are afoot.

PAGOLO: What news?

GRAVINA: The Duke is coming. His runners are already in sight.

VITELLOZZO: Michele! Michele! You are betraying us, you villain!

DON MICHELE: What? Betraying you? Explain yourself, sir. Is it I that decides?

OLIVEROTTO: He is right. Gravina and I had the call to horse sounded. As the castle will only surrender to the Borgia, that explains why he comes. It is an unforeseen event, that is all. Do you wish to be hemmed in between the enemy and the master?

VITELLOZZO: I do not know how things stand; I assure you, I vow to you that we are lost. All my warnings have been unavailing. The Trojans would not believe Cassandra either, nor the Jews their prophets.

OLIVEROTTO: The devil take you! You are speaking to one who is experienced in ambuscades; was it not I who had my uncle Giovanni Fogliani and his creatures killed while they, poor fools, thought they were quietly sitting down to supper with me? You will go politely to meet the Valentinois, and I will stay before the town gate with my companies. If anyone shows any sign of laying hands on you, we are by far the stronger and—we shall see!

DON MICHELE: Nothing could be plainer. One must be blind not to see it, and as soon as we consent to such an arrangement, you are bound to realise that we act in good faith.

PAGOLO: True. Come! to horse! The Duke arrives!

The country before Sinigaglia.—At some distance, in the background, the town gate, held by the free-lances' foot-soldiers. Squadrons in battle array, Oliverotto at their head, with his officers. In front, the troop of the Valentinois, inferior in numbers to the companies of the condottieri drawn up on the right; the Duke, Machiavelli, Seigneur de Candalle, Balthazar Castiglione, Don Michele, Don Ugo, Marcantonio da Fano, Leniolo, Mgr. d'Allegri, and other captains, all on horseback.

DUKE: Michele!

DON MICHELE: My lord?

DUKE: Bring your horse up to mine. Put his head forward. Now, listen! Here are our free-lances approaching. When I have spoken to them, two of you will take each of them . . . so as to do them honour . . . you understand? . . . And you will not leave their side.

DON MICHELE: No, my lord.

DUKE: What does this mean? Oliverotto has remained behind?

DON MICHELE: Yes, your Highness. He is over yonder at the head of his troops. That was the arrangement they made.

DUKE: Pass behind us, take a détour, rejoin Oliverotto and, at all costs, bring him here. At all costs! You understand me and promise to do so?

DON MICHELE: But, my lord——

DUKE: You hear me? . . . You promise me! Lose no time; be off at once!

Don Michele gallops off. The Captains come up and salute.

DUKE: Welcome, friends! Heaven be praised, there are no more misunderstandings between us. I might have some reason to scold you for your follies, but what is there that our affection and—I may confess—our true interests do not forgive? Your hand, Duke de Gravina! Greeting, Vitellozzo! Greeting, Pagolo! Come to my side. I never feel near enough to you. My strength lies in my soldiers' lances.

GRAVINA: We have sinned, Monsignor, forgetting what

your real feelings were. We shall know how to repair our faults by our services.

DUKE: I have every confidence that you will. (To the courtiers.) Gentlemen, take charge of our guests, and if you value my friendship, try to win theirs.

The horsemen, notified by Don Michele, surround the three captains; Don Michele comes up with Oliverotto.

Ah, Signor Oliverotto, where were you staying?

OLIVEROTTO (a trifle pale): Monsignor, I was at my post; I should not have wished any treachery on the part of the castellans to mar this glorious day.

DUKE: Those who are frank fear no guile, and I am afraid of no man. I have forgotten the past.

OLIVEROTTO: Thanks, my lord.

DUKE: As we talk, we are getting on, and here we are, I think, at my residence. I have a fine town to thank you for, gentlemen.

GRAVINA: We wish to give you a thousand others far finer, my Lord.

DUKE: You will not lack opportunities to realise that wish. Let us dismount and go indoors.

The Duke, the free-lances and all the retinue dismount. Great crowding and confusion.

What a noise! Order, gentlemen! Do not be in such a hurry! Monseigneur de Candalle, a word with you, please. (Draws him aside.) Your men-at-arms are in the saddle?

MGR. de CANDALLE: Yes, my lord. I have received orders from Don Michele.

DUKE: Rejoin them. Attack the free-lances vigorously. They will be taken by surprise, and no longer have their leaders. The booty is yours.

MGR. DE CANDALLE: Yes, my lord.

Exit.

THE DUKE (goes upstairs, followed by the four captains, surrounded by his troops on all sides. He enters a lofty room and turns suddenly): Arrest those traitors and disarm them!

OLIVEROTTO: Ah, you villain!

He is knocked down by a blow of the fist. The courtiers and the soldiers hurl themselves on the others and gag them.

DUKE: Take these men into the next room and keep watch over them. . . . I want to know what Mgr. de Candalle is doing.

DON MICHELE (at a window): The free-lances did not await the charge. They are in headlong flight, and the French, who have massacred many of them, are disbanding and pillaging the houses of the town.

DUKE: Run and see that a dozen of those savages are hanged! No one shall be allowed to do anything without my orders.

Exit Don Michele hastily.

Where is Michelotto?

MICHELOTTO (executioner): Here I am, my lord.

DUKE: Have you new ropes?

MICHELOTTO: Quite new; and my axe, my cutlass and my assistants.

DUKE: Go in there. I will watch you at work. Strangle one after the other! I will look on.

Michelotto unrolls his ropes from round his waist and goes into the room.

Come, gentlemen, a little amusement after so much hard work!

He opens the door, followed by his retinue; stampings, terrible shrieks, then silence and laughter.

The house occupied by the Duke.—A terrace looking out on to the sea; moonlight.—After supper; the Duke is half lying down on cushions; Machiavelli; Don Michele; musicians finishing a motet.

DUKE: I am very fond of this new music. We are in a great century, Messer Niccolò. Everything is being renewed. The other evening I had read to me a passage of Virgil, exceedingly beautiful, like every product of that divine

intellect, and I noted this phrase: "A majestic order is coming to birth." It seems that it is thus in our present age. How true it is of these days! The air that has just been performed is tinged with the softest melancholy. Go, my children, I have no further need of your services for this evening. Let them each be given a gold florin. Michele, are you certain that the French looters who attacked Sinigaglia have been hanged?

DON MICHELE: Yes, my lord. Perhaps it was a trifle overdone. You said a dozen, and I fear there are more.

DUKE: The joke is rather good. And the looting? . . . .

DON MICHELE: Stopped at once, Monsignor.

DUKE: That was the chief thing. You will have the men who have been hanged taken down. They will be quartered, and a portion of each will be fixed up in the different streets of the town. It is as well that my subjects should know that I do not allow them to be oppressed.

DON MICHELE: They know it already, my lord, and are showering benedictions on your name.

DUKE: They will have to know it even better, and therefore do as I command. What is more, don't omit to spread the report that my special desire is to destroy the French. Our people cannot be too strongly roused to hate these savages, and their hatred must be mingled with contempt. Go, Michele.

Exit Don Michele.

We have just solved our problem, Messer Niccolò.

MACHIAVELLI: I will make so bold as to offer your Highness a single observation.

DUKE: Speak frankly, by all means.

MACHIAVELLI: Seeing that you have preferred justice to mercy, was there not some risk in executing the two Orsini? Their house is powerful.

DUKE: I had written to Rome. This morning I learnt that the Cardinal, the Archbishop of Florence, and Messer Jacopo da Santa Croce have been surprised and arrested, as I

recommended to His Holiness. Without this success there would have been some hitch in my progress.

MACHIAVELLI: Then there seems to me no flaw in the scheme.

DUKE: Observe that it means not four rogues less in Italy, but the four condottieri who are by far the most formidable! After them there remains only small fry, such as can be accounted for without much trouble. By means of steel and hemp I have staunched a horrible wound. Some centuries from now men will hardly be able to believe that such a system ever existed. Captains of troops attached to no party, no state, no government—entering and leaving the service of princes at their will—eating up the princes' substance under the pretext of pay and that of their subjects by every form of caprice! What an anomaly! What folly! And from this source came the Sforza, who took Milan, and after them the Carmagnola, the terror of Venice. Upon my life, I have done you all the most signal service you could possibly demand!

MACHIAVELLI: Beyond all question, my lord, and thanks to you, I, too, can repeat the words of Virgil: *Magnus nascitur ordo.* And now, by forming militias recruited not from brigands but from sons of farmers, such as will obey not their captains but their sovereigns, you will complete your task.

DUKE: Time is needed—time, not to give me a respite, but to allow the intelligence of nations a chance of ripening. How much there is to change! The great must be curbed, the little kept in their places, money must be procured, and for all these needs certain and appropriate means must be devised. How many varied forms of action become necessary! These are the fruits of the will; they grow, they develop, they bud, and then they burst. Let us not force the crop too greatly, or it will fail! Time and patience are required: no slackness, no sleepiness, and no haste!

MACHIAVELLI: To put a constraint not on others but on oneself is the virtue of the strong.

DUKE: What a glorious night! Look at the admirable effect produced by the broken light of the moon on those waves moving beneath the vast horizon! We need here some of our artists and poets to explain all these marvels to our spellbound senses. . . . What can those fires be that climb the mountains in terraces? Look yonder.

MACHIAVELLI: I am inclined to think that they are the scattered camp-fires of the free-lances dispersed by Mgr. de Candalle.

DUKE: Your judgment is correct. Those poor reptiles are seeking holes where they may hide and escape.

MACHIAVELLI: Your Highness' crest is a dragon devouring serpents.

DUKE: And they say that I am insincere? Yes, indeed, a dragon, Messer Niccolò! I am not, like the wretched Duke of Milan, a wretched viper swallowing its young. I, I am the hydra of Lerna, a monster if you will, but one that rends and devours monsters, and I will destroy to the very last these gutter-born princes, these condottieri of base metal who obstruct my path. From the ruins of their nests I will build my eyrie, and a day will come when, from the foot of the Alps to the Straits of Messina, there will be no sway but mine.

FERRARA.

A loggia in the ducal palace.—Donna Lucrezia Borgia, seated in a gold-tasselled arm-chair is gazing at the country ; near her, leaning against one of the columns that support the roof, Don Alfonso d'Este, her husband.

ALFONSO: I must confess your brother has freed himself well from this entanglement. He approached the Gordian knot at first with caution, he handled it with skill, he seized it with resolution, and he cut it like an Alexander.

LUCREZIA: He is now far stronger and safer than ever. Such a crisis stimulates those who pass it successfully. Therefore it seems to me that you had best be on your guard against the Duke of Valentinois.

ALFONSO: Do you not think, Lucrezia, that he has done all the princes an eminent service? Henceforth we who hold the sceptre will also alone hold the sword.

LUCREZIA: That may be, but I want you to think, above all, of the increase of prestige and power which the Duke of Valentinois has acquired. I ask myself what he will want to do with it.

ALFONSO: Surely he will begin by strengthening his position in the Romagna, and for some time he will have his hands full with the Venetians and the Aragonese. He will therefore need our help, and I shall dole out just enough assistance to prevent him from falling, without setting him firmly upright.

LUCREZIA: I fancy you do not really understand Don Cesare. He is not the man to nibble thus at the grapes of fortune. You may take it for granted that he will make sure of the Romagna in such a way as to spare no one. Before long he will strike a mighty blow, and I am convinced that even at this moment his actual possessions are his least consideration.

ALFONSO: What do you expect him to attempt? However indefatigable he may be, he must take some time to regain his balance. Besides, I have nothing to fear from him,

for the simple reason that our mainstay—that is, France—is the same, and I am certain that Louis XII. would not let me be attacked.

LUCREZIA: I do not say that the Duke of Valentinois is thinking of attacking you, and I do not flatter myself that I can guess what he *is* thinking of. But, taking things in the lump, and knowing him as I do, I feel certain that he is planning to keep what he holds, not by supporting it, but rather by enlarging it. He will begin by attacking one of his neighbours, I know not which; but he will crush that neighbour, and I consider that each fresh accession of strength makes him formidable to us, seeing that if Fate herself put the whole world into his hands M. de Valentinois would never say "That is enough." As for Louis XII., he has indeed good reasons for keeping faith with you, and you can do much for or against him; but his irrepressible weakness for his Minister, M. d'Amboise, and the unhealthy ambition which draws that favourite towards the Papal tiara, the skill that the Duke of Valentinois has shown in persuading him that he has the sole disposal of the Papacy after the death of Alexander VI.—these are reasons more than enough for my brother to be all-powerful with the French. You will say they would make a grievous blunder in helping him to grow too strong. But blunders—it seems to me that human affairs are woven of hardly any other stuff.

ALFONSO: I am impressed by your arguments. I begin to see, in fact, that Don Cesare's greatness is becoming dangerous. All the same, I cannot guess what kind of precautions I ought to take. To show defiance. . . .

LUCREZIA: Would be the worst policy. On the contrary, you are Don Cesare's natural ally, and it is not advisable to appear to forget that.

ALFONSO: I have just sent one of my officers to congratulate him on the execution at Sinigaglia.

LUCREZIA: Suppose you were secretly to advise the Venetians, the Florentines, and even the Aragonese to be on their guard, seeing that we do not know whom the Duke of

Valentinois will assail next. . . . In this way you would strengthen the power of resistance without appearing to do so, and would be doing good service to an enemy who would later on repay you in kind.

ALFONSO: You are right—that is the line I shall follow.

LUCREZIA: In any case, it cannot do you any harm. I must not forget to read you this amusing letter.

ALFONSO: From whom is it?

LUCREZIA: From your sister, the Duchess of Mantua. You know that young Florentine sculptor, Michael Angelo Buonarotti, of whom they are beginning to talk so much?

ALFONSO: He does admirable work, and I should be very glad to attract him to our court.

LUCREZIA: Well, this Michael Angelo has made a statue of Eros, so beautiful that Lorenzo the Magnificent advised him to let it pass for an antique. The Cardinal of San Giorgio, who has little knowledge of the fine arts. . . .

ALFONSO: He's an inveterate fool and ignoramus.

LUCREZA: You are hard on him; but in this case he justifies your remarks. He bought the statue. By chance he learnt afterwards that it was modern. You can imagine his discomfiture. He frets and fumes, and in his contempt for a work that has become for him unworthy to be looked at, he wishes to sell it. The Duke of Valentinois gets wind of the affair. You know how exquisite his taste is; he immediately buys the despised masterpiece and makes a present of it to your sister; she tells me the story, and is beside herself with joy.

ALFONSO: Yes, we must certainly have Michael Angelo here. He is young, he is a fine artist, and he will become one of the master-craftsmen of Italy.

LUCREZIA: I am entirely of your opinion. Besides, our court must surpass all the others, and now that the French are established at Milan, all the men of genius and learning assembled at such expense by Ludovico Sforza are homeless. Would you not be glad to welcome here Antonio Cornazano,

who dedicated to me his two poems on the life of the Holy Virgin and of our Lord? and Giorgio Robusto, of Alessandria, who offered me his poems?

ALFONSO: Please have written for me at once the letters of invitation to all these excellent writers. Let them be couched in the most flattering terms; I will sign them myself. You give me great pleasure in allowing me the hope of adding these great intellects to those we possess already.

LUCREZIA: Ah, if we could only take from your sister's court Giovanni Piero Arrivabene and Il Spagnolo!

ALFONSO: Certainly, certainly, I should like to do so; but we are not so poor in merit that we have a right to complain. True, death has lately robbed us of the inimitable, the admirable Boiardo; but we still have Francesco Cieco, Lelio, the two Strozzi, and that young Ludovico Ariosto, of whom I hear wonders.

LUCREZIA: He deserves the highest praise, and the Latin epithalamium which he wrote for our wedding is one of the finest things of our age.

ALFONSO: I have no doubt of it, as you say so. You certainly have more understanding of poetry and literature than I; what I know, and what I repeat, is that our Ferrara must not yield to any Italian city in reverence for great talents, and I confess to you that I could wish to hear it said that my court holds them all.

LUCREZIA: It is an ambition worthy of you, my lord.

ALFONSO: Have a letter written at once to your three scholars; I will attend to the fresh instructions which have to be sent to Venice, to Florence and to Naples; then I will visit the workshops where they are making my new artillery. What a pity, Lucrezia, that you do not understand these matters as well as you understand poetry! I should be glad to discuss them with you.. Do you know that nothing in the world is so interesting as the expositions of mathematicians and engineers?

LUCREZIA: I can well believe you, Don Alfonso, but there

is no need for me to be very clever. It pleases me to hear that you know more of these things than all the other captains of our time. That is enough for my glory, and while you see some culverin cast, I will, by your leave, take my walk with my ladies in the gardens we have just planted.

ALFONSO: Go, Lucrezia; I kiss your hand.

A VILLAGE IN THE ROMAGNA.

Assembly of the secret societies known as Pacifici.—Armed peasants; two bravos.

FIRST BRAVO (saluting): *Beati Pacifici!*

LEADER OF THE PEASANTS: You are honest men; we thank you for having both come.

FIRST BRAVO: We should not have cared to miss the appointment. You should have a better opinion, most illustrious Signors, of our eagerness to offer our services to such respectable gentlemen as yourselves.

LEADER: Thanks for your kind words. So you have been sent by his Highness?

FIRST BRAVO: Yes, Don Cesare Borgia, Duke of Romagna, and no other, has dispatched us to you. Here is a ring he has delivered to us as token of gratitude.

LEADER: That is just as we understood. Take seats, gentlemen; you must be tired.

FIRST BRAVO: It is good to sit down. This cavalier and I have just ridden a stage of twenty leagues without stopping, and however accustomed one may be to the fatigues of war, one can hardly be blamed for being a little stiff in the legs.

LEADER: You know perhaps for what reason your presence here is requested?

FIRST BRAVO: The Duke gave us some idea.

LEADER: Without offence, are you as sure of your comrade as of yourself? The affair in question is delicate, and it is comforting to know with whom one has to deal.

FIRST BRAVO: I applaud your prudence. Know that my

friend is one of the champions of our age. You might almost apply to him the famous jest of Plutarch, in his admirable Roman history, when in speaking of an excellent captain he said to him: "He would not dare to remain in a room alone with a looking-glass, he would be afraid of seeing his own reflection." Indeed, when this cavalier dons his martial air, the effect is terrifying! If he speaks but little, it is because he is all action.

LEADER: Now let us come to our business. The task is to get rid of Malatesta.

BRAVO: Nothing easier.

LEADER: But do you know that he never walks out without a long troop of counsellors at his heels?

BRAVO: That matters little! My comrade and I are in the habit of surmounting the most thorny difficulties. Only tell me what kind of solution you want.

LEADER: I do not take your meaning.

BRAVO: Is it enough for you if Signor Malatesta gets what we swordsmen call a first notice, which would keep him to his bed . . . let us say . . . for a month or two? If you need no more to satisfy you, say so.

LEADER: We would rather make an end of him.

BRAVO: Admirable! Carry things through to the end, eh? Perfect! That point is settled? Good! Now we'll come to the means. Have you any preference? How would you like your man to be dispatched?

LEADER: As quickly and as safely as possible.

BRAVO: So I understand; my comrade and I never do things by halves. As we have to deal with one who is forewarned and on his guard, I make you the following proposal.

LEADER: What is that implement?

The spectators crowd round to look.

BRAVO: Ah, a little masterpiece! Yet to outward seeming a table-fork, and nothing more! See what a pretty fork it is, all in burnished and chiselled silver! Do you not admire this figure placed above the three prongs? Watch! I press like

this upon the head . . . the feet rise imperceptibly. . . . Look! There is a hollow. Do you see this hollow?

THE PEASANTS: Ay, ay, we do.

BRAVO: Well, if in this hollow I put a preparation, a little powder, some drops of liquid, and if the carver, at the moment of carving the meat for the guest whom I have in view, manages the fork deftly. . . . You understand? . . . The powder or the potion falls on the morsel which the hungry man is to carry to his lips. That is all there is in it, and for fifty ducats or so I shall win for myself the friendship of any servant you choose in the Malatesta household.

LEADER: An excellent device; but if this servant, with the work in his hand and the ducats in his pocket, went and told his master all, in the hope of raising another sum, we should get no return for our money. No! We prefer to deal with you alone.

BRAVO: I only proposed my idea to you because it is really a charming one, and the instrument is still unknown! One of my best friends is the inventor. You don't want it? Very well! I will get at him some other way, and as for finding the means, that is my affair. Let me see! The glass stiletto breaking in the wound would do pretty well. . . . I will consider! . . . Do you insist on the whole matter being settled by a fixed date?

LEADER: The sooner the better.

FIRST BRAVO: I understand! . . . Here we are at the fifth of May. My comrade-in-arms and I ought to find ourselves on the 20th of June at Vicenza, where the most serene Signory of Venice honoured us with a mission. Between now and then, your discussion with Signor Malatesta will be over; you can count upon my word.

LEADER: Many thanks! Here are a hundred ducats in advance.

BRAVO: No matter! . . No matter! . . . It's of no conse-

quence! . . . All for the pleasure of doing you a service. Thanks all the same. We kiss your Lordships' hand.

The Bravos withdrew.—Enter Romagnese Gentlemen.

FIRST GENTLEMAN: Good evening, friends! Already re-united and in agreement?

LEADER: We are only awaiting you.

GENTLEMAN: Well, here we are! Countrymen all, good friends, good neighbours, all Pacifici, leagued to establish and maintain order against the factions and the tyrants, neither Guelphs nor Ghibellines, nor friends of the Malatesta, nor tools of the Baglioni; but friends to ourselves, to our families, to the public peace! Well, then, most illustrious signors, let us settle our plans and consider how best to act.

A PEASANT: So long as there are towns in the world, there will be burgesses, and with burgesses peace is impossible. I have a cousin who is watchman at one of the gates at Rimini. In an emergency he would not refuse to allow us an entry. Suppose we did a little ransacking in the houses of that villainous town.

A GENTLEMAN: An excellent idea.

General murmur of approval.

LEADER OF THE PEASANTS: Most illustrious signors, let us come to an understanding! With whom we are allied? With the condottieri?

THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY: Heaven forbid!

LEADER: Then you are allies of the Guelphs, where the lord is Ghibelline, and with the Ghibellines, where the prince is Guelph? Is that so?

Violent murmurs.

No more? In this case, you, true, honest and excellent Pacifici, you give your hands to Don Cesare Borgia?

SEVERAL VOICES: Certainly!

LEADER: Then don't lay a finger on Rimini! The Duke will have no meddling with his arrangements; we had better listen to the message he sends us. He now proposes to carry out in Tuscany what he has just finished in the cities of the

Romagna—to destroy the tyrannies of every sort, to humble the great and raise the lowly. Do we follow that lead?
THE ASSEMBLY: Yes! yes! Long live the Valentinois!
LEADER: Shall we write to the Duke that he can count upon us?
THE ASSEMBLY: Let us write! Long live the Valentinois! *Beati Pacifici!* We'll burn Florence!

MILAN.

The interior of the cathedral.—High mass is being chanted ; several clerics in the choir ; a great crowd in the nave and at the back.

IN THE CHOIR

A CANON (on his knees): How weak is my heart! How cold my soul! Alas! I have not the power to penetrate deeply into the ineffable bounties of my God! I would fain raise myself to the Throne of the Almighty! . . . I would fain lose myself in its rays! . . . My God! help me! My God! uphold me!

He prostrates himself.

SECOND CANON: Are you dining with us at the Archbishop's?
THIRD CANON: I am! We shall have a most superb trout!
SECOND CANON: It will not be eatable if that idiot of a Fra Lorenzo does not make haste and finish his mass. (To a choir boy.) Here, my child!
CHOIR BOY: Yes, Monsignor.
SECOND CANON: Go and tell Fra Lorenzo to hurry up.
CHOIR BOY (to the officiating priest): The Prior, Dom Paolo, begs you to finish quickly.
FRA LORENZO: What is he troubling about? *I* am not dining at the Archbishop's. Attention, fool! *Dominus vobiscum!*
CHORISTERS: *Et cum spiritu tuo!**

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* The Lord be with you . . . And with thy spirit!—Tr.

IN THE NAVE.

A MENDICANT FRIAR: Buy indulgences! indulgences! They are to be had at all prices! Brother Christians, buy indulgences!

A GAILY-DRESSED WOMAN: Heavens, how hot it is!

Fans herself.

SECOND WOMAN: It's unbearable! Pass me your bottle of smelling-salts, Monna Bianca, I beg you, I have forgotten mine!

THIRD WOMAN: With pleasure—here it is! What a false villain that Felipe is!

FIRST WOMAN: My dear, he paid me court long enough for me to know what to think of him.

FOURTH WOMAN: That may be, but he's good-looking! They're raising the Host!

All the women kneel and beat their breasts.

A MAN (to an old dame in spectacles reading her missal): Madam . . . madam . . . will you buy rosaries blessed by the Holy Father?

THE OLD DAME: Leave me in peace!

THE MAN: Madam . . . will you buy a relic of the great St. Ambrose? A bone from his elbow! . . . Not dear! . . . And authentic! . . .

THE OLD DAME: I tell you to leave me in peace!

THE MAN: Do you want any fine soap or Spanish gloves?

THE OLD DAME: If you don't leave me in peace, I'll call the beadles!

The man goes off.

AT THE BACK.

Two citizens, near a chapel, telling their beads, their caps under their arms.

FIRST CITIZEN: *Et benedictus fructus ventris tui.* . . . That doesn't prevent the rascal's having gone off without paying for the three dinners he owes me, and may the plague

seize me if he'll ever pay! . . . *Jesus! Amen! Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Domine. . . .*

SECOND CITIZEN: *Qui es in caelis, sanctificetur!* . . . I told you so fifty times! How stupid of you to give credit to students! Look here, Ser Guglielmo, did I tell you so or did I not? . . . *Nomen tuum, adveniat regnum.** . . . Deuce take them, the students! . . . If they were to pay, they would no longer be students!

A CAVALIER (to an old woman): See, dear Lorenzina, here is the note!

OLD WOMAN: I tell you once more, it's very difficult! She rebuffed me and threatened to let her mother know!

CAVALIER: Here's another sequin!

THE OLD WOMAN: I'll try to convince her . . . but only because of my great affection for you. If I make you a sign, stand behind her; you can speak to her then as much as you like.

CAVALIER: May heaven inspire you, or I shall lose my wager.

The Sanctus begins.

TWO MENDICANTS (crying at the top of their voices): For the crusade! For the crusade! Give for the crusade! Deliver the Holy Tomb! For the crusade! Lords and ladies, take pity on the poor Christians slaughtered every day by the savage Turks! For the crusade!

Three evil-faced boys near a pillar.

FIRST BOY: Is it that gentleman, yonder?

SECOND BOY: That one with the sunburnt complexion and the little black moustache?

THIRD BOY: Yes . . . and the black doublet.

SECOND BOY: A ruff round his neck, his right hand in a torn glove . . . the other ungloved?

THIRD BOY: The very man.

* And blessed the fruit of thy womb . . . Hail, Mary, filled with grace, Lord . . . which art in heaven, hallowed be . . . thy name, thy kingdom come . . .

SECOND BOY: He's big enough to knock me down if he turns round. I will throw my stiletto at ten paces and then decamp.

FIRST BOY: If he pursues you, we'll make a feint of passing quickly and we'll down him.

SECOND BOY: Is that sure?

FIRST BOY: When we tell you, you dolt! . . . Don't miss! Strike the hip, crossways! It's only a matter of a five-inch knife-thrust. We are paid in advance.

SECOND BOY: Wait a moment till I've lit a candle to St. Nicholas.

FIRST BOY: Be quick and come back. . . . We shall follow the gallant in the lane behind the church. You'll be hiding in the angle of the wall.

SECOND BOY: Have no fear—I am certain of my aim. He'll keep to his bed for a fortnight!

The organ plays— a rocket explodes.

THE CROWD: Ah! great heavens! all is lost! The French are slaughtering us! Holy Madonna, all is lost!

VOICES IN THE CROWD: No! no! no! Fear nothing! It's only urchins amusing themselves! Jesus! my purse is stolen! Will you leave go of my cloak?

A WOMAN (kneeling in a corner): I thank Thee, God! My poor brother, my poor brother! He won't die! Thou hast not willed it so! Thou dost give him back to me, I owe him to Thee! All the days of my life I will pray to Thee! I cannot repay my debt to Thee! How I love Thee and see Thee in Thy unexampled goodness! My God, never forget me! Guard my poor brother whom Thou hast restored to me!

She weeps.

A NOTARY (to his wife): Haven't you had enough of your devotions? If we don't go at once, we shall be stifled by the crowd. Let us get to the door, come! Make haste!

WIFE: I am tucking up my skirts so as not to be jostled.

NOTARY: Say rather that you are trying to make yourself

noticed! Do you think, Monna Pomponia, that I don't know these tricks? Do you think you can hoodwink me?

WIFE: Who dreams of hoodwinking you? Let me just say one more *Ave.*

NOTARY: You can say it as you go along. What are you doing now?

WIFE: I am going to take some holy water, if I can, but there is a great crowd round it.

A CAVALIER: Will you permit me, madam, to offer you some?

THE LADY: Most willingly, signor. . . . (Very low.) Come at two o'clock. . . . He will be gone out for the day. Come!

THE CAVALIER: Where?

THE WIFE: In the lower room. . . . Go away, he's turning round!

NOTARY: Come! Shall we be finished to-day or to-morrow? Who is that gentleman who gave you holy water?

HIS WIFE: I don't know; I have never seen him before.

LACKEYS (pushing back the crowd): Room! room! room for her Grace the Duchess!

Everyone goes out of the church; the organ goes on playing.

ROME

Cardinal Corneto's vineyard.—A room looking out over the gardens, through great windows decked with vine-leaves.—Pope Alexander VI.; Don Cesare Borgia.

THE POPE: True! Although the sun has sunk, the heat is still overpowering. Still, I never felt stronger than I do now. The grandeur of your schemes, the daring of your resolutions, give strength to my will. All is turning out as we wish. We are on the verge of a decisive moment, not only for you, Don Cesare, but for all Italy. Our triumph will be hers, for he is a poor statesman whose success profits none but himself, and the arrangement of this world is such that when the wise man sees his designs prosper, the dull mass of petty men reap the advantage. That is what justifies the means. We are about to strike an audacious blow. I do not attempt to hide that, and you know it as well as I do. To-morrow, when it awakes, Rome will learn the names of the cardinals who are to die to-night. I say once more, it is a bold stroke, but it is necessary. We must strike terror into our enemies, and, by a sweeping confiscation of the property which the death of the cardinals will leave open to us, provide for the pressing needs of your Tuscan enterprise. This point gained, we shall be able to dispense for good with the help of France.

DON CESARE: There will be no one left to cause us anxiety. The ship of our hopes, propelled by its own motion, will sail on even if no wind drives it. For my part, I defy fortune to break the chain with which I have bound her arms.

THE POPE: Our guests will soon arrive. . . . I fancy I hear them. . . . Ah! Don Cesare, who of them suspects that he will never leave this room alive? . . . But I see that I have not got—— No, I have not. . . . Strange! . . . How could I have forgotten?

DON CESARE: What have you forgotten?

THE POPE: A mere trifle! . . . But I must not remain without it. . . . Call Caraffa!

DON CESARE: Here he is in the ante-chamber. . . . Come in, Caraffa; the Holy Father wishes to speak to you.

THE POPE: Caraffa, return quickly to the Vatican. . . . Go into my room. . . . Look for and bring me that little golden box which contains . . . you know?

CARAFFA: A consecrated wafer?

THE POPE: That's it. Go!

CARAFFA: What, you haven't it on you?

THE POPE: Well, it was a piece of carelessness—I forgot it, just think!

CARAFFA: How can one overlook a thing that shelters one from every danger?

THE POPE: You are quite right. . . . Go and look for my box; don't lose a minute, do you hear? I shall not be at peace until I have my box in my pocket.

CARAFFA: I'll run! Exit.

THE POPE: Have you taken precautions, Don Cesare, so that everything will be carried out without a hitch?

DON CESARE: There are six flagons of Spanish wine. Your butler, Matteo, put the powder in it under my eyes, and I instructed him to serve the mixture only to those whom I shall point out to him. Matteo is a man to be trusted.

THE POPE: No doubt. In any case, I repeat, take every precaution.

DON CESARE (smiling): Have no fear.

THE POPE: I like your determined spirit. . . . But how hot it is! Ho, there!

A SERVANT: Most Holy Father?

THE POPE: Tell Matteo to bring us some wine; I am dying of thirst.

DON CESARE: I too shall be glad to drink, and after that we'll have a walk in the shade of the garden while waiting for our guests.

Enter two lackeys bearing on a tray two cups and a flagon of wine.

THE POPE: Why does not Matteo come himself when I send for him?

FIRST LACKEY: Most Holy Father, he has gone back to town to get some peaches that were required.

THE POPE: Where did you take this wine that you are giving us?

FIRST LACKEY: From the sideboard, Holy Father.

DON CESARE (laughing): Have you any qualms?

THE POPE: No! But it would have been better for Matteo to remain here. Your health, Don Cesare!

DON CESARE: I thank you, and I drink yours—may your life be long, happy and glorious!

They drink.

THE VATICAN.

The Pope's bedchamber.

CARAFFA: To send me on such an errand in such hot weather! Only Alexander could be capable of such treatment! His wafer! His wafer! Since he was assured that, so long as he had it on him, no misfortune could come to him, he goes mad if ever he lets it out of his sight! . . . How ridiculous men are! What risk is he running? . . . Now, where can that accursed box be? Probably on the table near the bed. . . . What is this? . . . Holy Madonna! . . . What do I see! . . . Oh! . . . What ails me? . . . Am I going mad? . . . My hair stands on end! . . . My teeth are chattering! . . . My God! My God! I am dying! . . . Oh, that I were far away! . . . I am going mad! . . . It's not possible! . . . The Pope himself! . . . Here! . . . Oh Jesus! . . . Oh, all the saints! . . . What does it mean? . . . The Pope Alexander lying on his bed! . . . And I just left him over yonder! . . . He is livid! his face is all black! . . . He is dead! dead! dead! I must go away!

Rushes to the door, shrieking, opens it with difficulty and falls fainting on the landing, where the servants pick him up.

CARDINAL CORNETO'S VINEYARD.

The dining-room. Statues, pictures, rich tapestries from Flanders, great carved sideboards, mosaic paving. A vast table covered with gold and silver plate ; on a great dish in the centre a roast peacock, dressed in its feathers, the tail spread out : a pyramid of fruits ; great vases filled with flowers.—Pope Alexander, Don Cesare Borgia ; the Cardinals Castellar, Romolino, Francesco Soderini, Copis, Niccolò di Fiesco, Sprata, Corneto, Iloris, Casanova, Valentino ; chamberlains, butlers, lackeys, pontifical guards on duty at the doors.

THE POPE (sitting down to table): A fine evening! An evening for merriment, for encounters of wit. I know no pleasure to compare with that of supping in good and brilliant company.

CARDINAL CORNETO: What happiness, what felicity to celebrate thus with your Holiness the distinguished favour which you have deigned to bestow on us all by raising us to the Cardinalate!

THE POPE: It is a very great pleasure to satisfy one's friends and justice at once.

CARDINAL COPIS (whispering to his neighbour, Cardinal di Fiesco): Do you not find the Holy Father strangely pale?

CARDINAL DI FIESCO (whispering): I was just going to draw your attention to the drawn features of the Duke of Valentinois.

CARDINAL ROMOLINO (whispering to Cardinal Valentino): If I had been able to cry off, I should not have come. I distrust this sort of ceremony.

THE POPE: Cardinal Romolino, since the affair of the heretic Savonarola, you have never ceased to give us proofs of your notable friendship. You see that I have recognised it.

CARDINAL ROMOLINO: Most Holy Father, my devotion to your person has ever been unbounded!

CARDINAL SODERINI (whispering to Cardinal Castellar): The Pope is indeed livid this evening. What has he in store for us? I would give much not to be here.

CARDINAL CASTELLAR: So would I. It is stifling in this room.

DON CESARE BORGIA: I feel unwell. . . . I don't know

what is the matter with me. . . . I must go out. . . . I can bear it no longer. . . . My head is reeling. . . . What is the matter with you, Holy Father?

THE POPE: I don't know. . . . I think. . . . Ah, what agony!

He falls to the ground. The guests rise, dumbfounded. Don Cesare Borgia tries to walk a few steps, then rolls on the floor. Confusion.

THE POPE (to the butler who raises him): Listen . . . listen. . . . Go away, all of you! Where did they take the wine that was given me a little while ago?

BUTLER: It was one of the bottles put aside by His Highness the Duke.

THE POPE: In that case, my son and I . . . are lost!

He faints.

DON MICHELE (entering brusquely): I hear that His Highness is ill?

Goes to the Duke.

Speak to me, my lord.

THE DUKE: Come close to me. . . .

Don Michele kneels beside him.

I am poisoned. . . . So is the Pope. . . . Have us carried to the Vatican. . . . Call out all my troops. . . . Seize the Fort of St. Angelo! . . . Save the treasure! . . . If we are attacked, defend us like a tiger! defend me!

He loses consciousness.

CARDINAL CORNETO: My lords, the Holy Father is very ill. We must consider the Church . . . the public peace! . . . I am returning to Rome.

ALL THE CARDINALS: Let us not separate! We'll go with you—to your house. We must decide what had best be done.

Exeunt the Cardinals.

DON MICHELE (to the servants and soldiers): Take the first litters you can find! Quick! to the Vatican! . . . The first man that stumbles I'll strike dead!

THE PUBLIC SQUARE.

Great concourse of citizens, women, children, boatmen, porters, vagabonds. —Shouts, tumult. Barricades are being raised at the street corners.

CROWD: He is dead! The devil take his soul. . . . Alexander's soul! Hell is afraid of him! The monster! He wanted to poison all the cardinals! He has poisoned himself! He did not forget his son! It's well done! Are they dead? They are dead! No! Yes! They are to be buried this evening! The Valentinois is not dead! I tell you he is! Let us dig them up! To the Tiber! To the Tiber! To the Tiber with their carcasses! No holy ground for the anti-Christ!

A FRESH TROOP (running up): To arms! The Borgia's men are breaking into the houses! To the barricades! We'll defend ourselves!

Trumpets, drums, arquebusades

A MAN (exasperated): The Orsini are looting the friends of the Borgia! A troop of them has just been massacred!

THE CROWD: Bravo! Fire, sack, blood!

Rumbling of cannon

What's that?

CRIES FROM ANOTHER END OF THE SQUARE: The Fort of St. Angelo is firing on the Orsini! To arms! Against the Borgia and the Barons! The Spaniards and the Colonna will come in and make havoc everywhere!

A VOICE: Here are the French! They are giving no quarter!

CROWD: To the barricades! Defend yourselves! To the river with the Pope!

A company of soldiers charges the populace

CROWD: Save yourselves! The devil take the hindmost!

Firing from both sides, many killed and wounded; the populace flies, forms up again in the street and shoots again; a mêlée. The cannon continues to roar.

AN ORSINI PALACE.

Fabio Orsini, the Count de Petigliano, Bartolommeo Alviane, other Orsini, all armed.

FABIO: Michele has just set fire to our house on Monte Giordano.

PETIGLIANO: Never mind that, my brothers and cousins! His master will pay for all the damage together. Two hundred cuirassiers, a thousand arbalestiers, cross-bowmen and pikesmen, these are our forces. Let us act without delay. Prospero Colonna has come in with Aragonese troops. True, he wants to kill the Valentinois, but while on the way, he'll attack us also, have no doubt. We have against us the Borgia, the Colonna, the cardinals, the populace, the Spaniards. . . . Let us steal a march on our enemies!

ALVIANE: The Valentinois offers to restore our towns if we give him quarter for a few days. I am inclined to accept, in spite of the burning of our house, which we will avenge later on.

AN ORSINI: No! Let us crush the Borgia and come to terms with the rest!

FABIO: With the Colonna, it's impossible, and with the populace, never! No union with the mob!

PETIGLIANO: Let us treat with the Borgia. He is lost! A few days' respite will not save him. All the Romagna has risen as it is. If united with him, we shall make the Cardinals tremble—that is the important point for the moment. Is that agreed?

THE ORSINI: It is agreed!

PETIGLIANO: To arms, then! Let us go down into the streets!

Puts on his casque; all go out, with clinking of armour and spurs.

CARDINAL CORNETO'S HOUSE.

A large painted chamber.—Gathering of the Cardinals ; officers of all kinds, secretaries, monks.

CARDINAL COPIS: I am not yet myself again! Those monsters designed to poison us, and their deed recoiled on themselves.

CARDINAL DI FIESCO: We are assured that Cesare is not dead. He had himself kept for an hour in iced water, where his bitter agonies caused him terrible convulsions. They say also that the physicians opened the entrails of two live mules and plunged him right into that horrible tomb, hoping that he would recover his strength.

CARDINAL CASTELLAR: I do not think that Michele would show so much violence if he did not reckon on his master's recovery.

CARDINAL CORNETO: Still, Alexander is dead, right enough! It's horrible! Some porters put him in his coffin! They kicked his body to pieces; it was swollen by the poison and falling into shreds. The soldiers mocked at the priests who wished to pray. It is monstrous!

CARDINAL SODERINI: My lords, my lords, we are not here to argue, but rather to save this ill-starred city. All the demons who possessed Alexander seem to have escaped from his corpse only to assail us the more easily. Murder, pillage, arson, crimes, outrages, nothing is wanting! And we who, at this moment, represent the sole lawful authority, do we come to no decision? Are we to spend our time in talking, shivering and weeping? Come, what are your orders! I call on you to show your intelligence, harden your hearts! Let a manly resolution spring from your heads like an armed Minerva! Give us an aegis to cover the city and the world!

CARDINAL VALENTINO: We must raise troops at once and oppose them to the factions!

CARDINAL CASANOVA: I second that proposal, and if the Sacred College will depute the task to me, I undertake to

obtain a prompt result. There are many captains present in Rome who will accept my terms.

ALL: Well spoken! Act accordingly!

CARDINAL CASANOVA: I hasten to perform my mission. Count upon my zeal!

Exit with his followers.

CARDINAL ROMOLINO: Let us immediately summon the ambassadors. If not, the Colonna will come to an agreement with Spain, and the Orsini with France; the Venetians will begin intriguing in the Romagna, and the Florentines will prepare unsurmountable difficulties with the populace. In calling at once upon the Christian princes to uphold our authority—the only lawful one, for we are the future Conclave—we render them incapable of doing us harm. Besides, the Emperor will be on our side.

Universal assent.

CARDINAL VALENTINO: In the hurry of events, I foresaw the opinion of our venerable brother, and I made the ambassadors promise to present themselves here. I am told that they are awaiting your good pleasure.

ALL: Let them come in! Let them come in!

Enter the ambassadors of France, Spain, the Empire, Venice, Florence, Milan, the Swiss Leagues.—Great tumult under the windows.—Arquebusades continue. The cannon of the Vatican and of Fort St. Angelo are heard.

CARDINAL CORNETO: Welcome, my Lords Ambassadors. The Church of Christ has need of its children. We summon you in order to claim the support due from the Christian princes to their Holy Mother. We are at a crisis. What is your reply?

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: My Lords Cardinals, before all, my duty compels me to enter a solemn protest against an outrage.

CARDINALS: An outrage? On our part?

SPANISH AMBASSADOR: I will see the truth vindicated.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: If I were here in a private capacity, Your Grace would not use such a phrase twice. But

my master's honour takes precedence of mine. Listen to what has just happened; I cannot disguise my indignation.

CARDINAL CORNETO: My Lord Ambassador, the city is burning, sedition is rife; could we not listen to your complaints at a more seasonable moment?

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: If I am not given a hearing, I will go. I arrived at the door of this palace before the Lord Ambassador of Spain. His noblemen threw themselves upon mine, and while they were drawing swords, the Ambassador passed in front of me and came in first. That is my plaint! Well, my Lords, has a Prince of Aragon the right to precede the Most Christian King? When there is a question of approaching you, shall the eldest son of the Church come after the others? I demand at once a full reparation.

Enter the Cardinals Giuliano della Rovere and Piccolomini.

THE EMPEROR'S AMBASSADOR: It is at any rate strange that, when I am here, other crowns should claim precedence.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR (heatedly): How do you mean, sir?

SPANISH AMBASSADOR (putting his hand to his sword): I know but one way of speaking and one of replying.

CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE: So, gentlemen, this is what you have to say to the Sacred College? At the moment when the Holy City is becoming the prey of the riotous; when from this spot you hear the firing of cannon, arquebusades, blasphemies, and when through these windows, yes, through these windows the fires of the incendiaries appear before our outraged eyes—instead of coming to our aid, you display to us the unhappy rivalries caused by your vanity! By the wounds and the death of Jesus my Saviour, you are making mock of us, my Lord Ambassador of France.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: My Lord Giuliano della Rovere, I cannot allow you to use such a tone, and there is no red hat that shall cheat me of an insolent adversary!

CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE (walking straight towards

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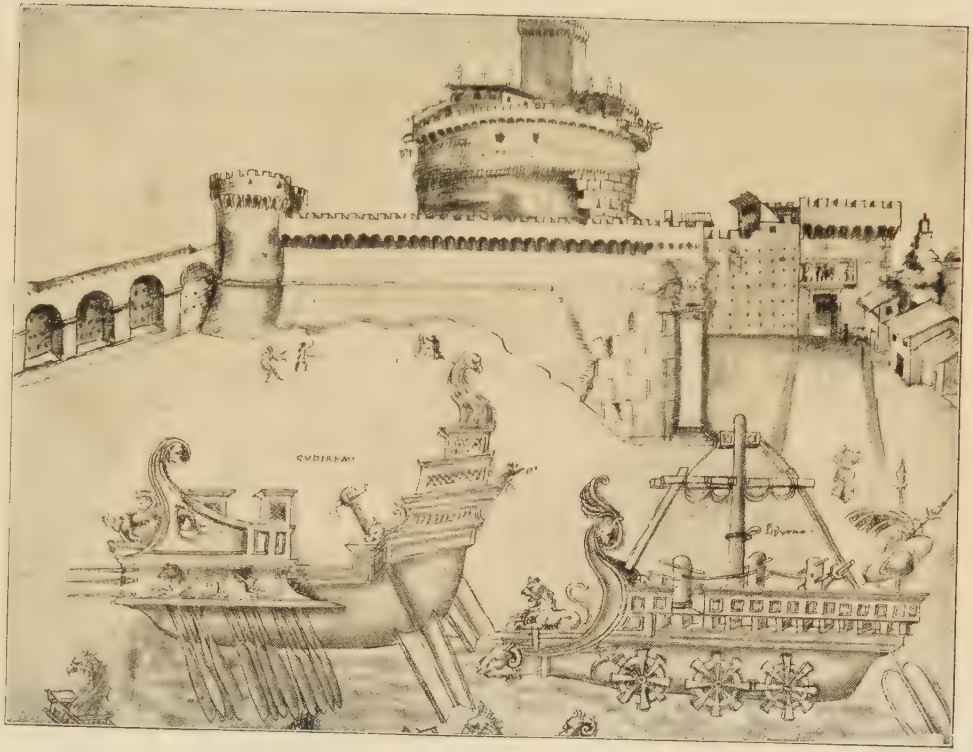

THE ENGELSBURG IN THE XVTH CENTURY

him): Read this letter, read this order and lower your forehead! Lower it, sir, lower it, lower still—and obey! Our venerable brother, the Cardinal d'Amboise, the revered minister of the King, your master, writes you this! You recognise the sign and seal? Well, read! He orders you to put French troops at the Conclave's disposal, and the Conclave orders you to make them quit the town.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: My Lord Cardinal, it is no less true that. . . .

CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE (whispering to him): You shall have complete reparation at a more opportune moment.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: Every difficulty is smoothed over. Our French companies will leave the city, as you will have it so. I will add, however, that the Duke of Valentinois offers to uphold your authority.

SEVERAL CARDINALS: Then he is not dead?

CARDINAL PICCOLOMINI: He is very ill, but to all appearances he is master of his body as he has always been master of others' will. I am not in favour of accepting his proposals.

CARDINAL COPIS: Take care! he has become reconciled with the Orsini. We must not show a hostile front to that powerful family, which is asking if it may assist us.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: I should advise you not to quarrel with the Duke of Valentinois. He is a man of subtle intellect; he holds the strongest positions; his artillery is numerous, and his coffers are full to overflowing with money.

SPANISH AMBASSADOR: If an arrangement is come to with the Duke of Valentinois, I demand, in the name of the Catholic King, that our troops and our allies be also admitted, among others, Don Prospero Colonna and all the men of his house.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: That will be opening the door to anarchy!

SPANISH AMBASSADOR: Anarchy, it seems to me, is even better represented by you than by us.

CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE: This is the decision of the Sacred College. The Conclave is to meet as soon as possible in order to fill the vacancy to the throne. Never was there more reason to wish for the salutary presence of a Sovereign Pontiff than at this terrible crisis, when bodies and souls are equally in peril! It is not proper that so august an assembly should be held amid the clash of arms. No, gentlemen, no! It is not right, it shall not be! French, Aragonese, Colonna, Orsini, all who have sword in hand shall go: the Duke of Valentinois shall go like the rest. None but Papal troops shall remain here!

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: My Lord Cardinal, I can hardly believe that the King, my master, will approve of such measures.

CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE: My heart is still uplifted by the noble sentiments just expressed to me by our venerable brother the Cardinal d'Amboise. "Cardinal della Rovere," said this truly great man to me, "I should be ashamed if I, a prince of the Roman Church, gave the slightest sign of intending to force the hand of the Conclave; the Conclave must be free in its choice. The army of the Most Christian King will depart from the walls of Rome." Those were the very words of this admirable minister. You will show him your recognition, my Lords, of this magnanimity, and I doubt not that the Holy Ghost will dictate to you what you must do in order to reward all his virtues.

The French and Venetian ambassadors look at each other in amazement.

CARDINALS: There's no doubt this is a masterstroke!

CARDINAL CASANOVA (aside to Cardinal Romolino): What a cunning move is this of Giuliano's! Thus we are rid of the French Pope!

CARDINAL ROMOLINO (aside): I was afraid before that we could not avoid him. Are you minded to vote for Giuliano?

CARDINAL CASANOVA: Never! He is too crafty and too hard. What we need is an insignificant creature.

CARDINAL ROMOLINO: What say you to old Piccolomini?

CARDINAL CASANOVA: Not a bad notion. We will talk it over afterwards. Let us listen to what they are saying.

CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE: A secretary of the Briefs is about to go to the Duke of Valentinois to induce him to retire; and you, my Lord Ambassador of Spain, what do you decide?

SPANISH AMBASSADOR: Seeing that the King, my master, yields to none in respect for the Conclave, so soon as the French leave the city our troops and our allies will likewise depart.

CARDINAL DELLA ROVERE: Pray thank the King on our behalf. (Aside to the French Ambassador.) Write at once to His Holiness. . . . I beg your pardon, I mean the Most Reverend Cardinal d'Amboise . . . that, thanks to his well-advised moderation, his election to the Papal Throne is a foregone conclusion.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR: I do not know what to make of all this.

———

THE VATICAN.

A room with closed curtains.—Don Cesare Borgia lying down, thin and worn; Don Michele.

DON CESARE: Come nearer . . . I cannot speak loud . . . What have you done?

DON MICHELE: We remain masters, completely masters of the quarter. Your men are firm and loyal. I compromised them by the looting of some houses. They know that if they disband they will be wiped out.

DON CESARE: Hell, what pain I am in!

DON MICHELE: The Cardinals send you word to leave the city within three days. The French are gone.

DON CESARE: Then the Cardinal d'Amboise gives up the idea of being Pope?

DON MICHELE: Giuliano della Rovere has persuaded him that he would be Pope with greater glory by leaving the Conclave full liberty.

DON CESARE: I had forgotten that among the French the show of glory eclipses the reality.

DON MICHELE: You will see—Giuliano will get himself elected.

DON CESARE: I doubt it. They are too afraid of his talents and of his ferocity. I have no means of maintaining myself here. Let us yield with a good grace, while we can still negotiate. We will ask the Cardinals to let me go off with my artillery, my troops, my money-chests, and under the guarantee that I shall not be attacked.

DON MICHELE: A poor outlook!

DON CESARE: If I were up, I should act differently. At this moment, my only aim is to gain time.

DON MICHELE: Then you will not lose courage?

DON CESARE BORGIA: So long as I breathe, the world is mine! I have my foot on its neck!

FLORENCE.

The convent and hospital de Tintori, at Saut' Onofrio.—A great workshop; marbles, some sketched out, others finished, others still unworked in the rough; benches, stools.—Michael Angelo Buonarotti, busily working at a vast cartoon.—Knocking at the door.—Michael Angelo goes to look through a wicket, makes the key turn in the lock and opens.

MICHAEL ANGELO: As it is you, come in.

FRANCESCO GRANACCI: I have been at the Palazzo; your glory is complete.

MICHAEL ANGELO (applying himself again to his work): Tell me how things are going.

He kisses him.

GRANACCI: Your glory is at its height, I tell you! All the masters who are at Florence are crowding around your work in amazement. Ah, the cartoon of the War of Pisa is an immortal work—no one disputes it! People never weary of examining this miracle, and those who are copying it discover in it a thousand beauties which ordinary admirers will never suspect.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I did my best.

GRANACCI: But you'll do yet greater things! . . . It is hardly believable, but I believe it.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I shall do what the holy goodness of my Creator has given me the power to do. As I have worked up to this day, so I shall go on. If the cartoon has gained the approval it deserves, I rejoice from the depths of my soul; but if I were never to execute anything better, I would gladly die, for I have much more to say! Who are the masters whom you saw before my drawing, and who praised it?

GRANACCI: First came da Vinci with all his pupils. He went into endless raptures.

MICHAEL ANGELO: He is the most insincere man I know, and in the matter of loquacious politeness he has nothing to learn. All his words are honey-sweet . . . like his painting. Messer Lionardo has a soul that is subtle, but not frank or

strong. . . . He detests me, and I return the compliment. Nevertheless, he is a great painter. Who came next?

GRANACCI: Ridolfo Ghirlandaio.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Ah, he *is* a friend! Heaven bless him, he's a worthy son of his father! I have to thank Domenico for many kind services. May heaven forsake me if ever I forget that!

GRANACCI: Then I saw in the crowd Baccio Bandinelli, le Beruguetta, Andrea del Sarto. . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO (raising his head): What did Andrea say?

GRANACCI: Oh, Andrea . . . as he heard some ignoramuses declare that a foreshortening was too stiff or a nose too long, he looked at them coldly, took a stool, sat down, and, putting a cartoon before him, began to copy.

Michael Angelo bites his lip, crosses himself, and goes on working.

GRANACCI: Well, that is what Sanzio did also.

MICHAEL ANGELO: That Raphael . . . that boy . . . he is not a child of God! I am not very fond of him, Granacci. . . . Still, I should not care to say . . . in truth, what he is driving at; I do not wish . . . . never mind! I will not speak evil of him!

Returns to his work.

GRANACCI: For my part, I shall begin from to-morrow to follow the example of Andrea del Sarto, and of him whom you call the boy. I shall not be satisfied until I have finished a complete copy of the masterpiece.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You must also invent something on your own account.

GRANACCI: Oh, I—as in the past, I shall do decorations for festivals; that is my lot; I have no genius, I know quite well. I love Beauty—that is all—and I am better fitted to be a lover than a painter.

MICHAEL ANGELO (heatedly): They are all the same! What cringing dogs men are! If you must be a slave at all costs, find at least a worthier form of slavery; but when some

wretched woman has lied to you, betrayed you, sold you and finally thrown you into a corner, with your heart bleeding. . . . By heaven! You make me feel ashamed!

GRANACCI: It would only need love's kisses to make all that worth while a second time.

MICHAEL ANGELO: If you love me, no more of such talk, you know I cannot endure it!

GRANACCI: But, seriously, what would you have me try my hand on? I stand rooted before your pictures—before your Pietà, for instance! Why, I remain dumbfounded; you have thoughts that I shall never have; you see clearly, you gaze at what for me will be eternally veiled; you imagine what I could never dream of, and I feel myself so puny, so weak, so powerless by the side of all that you can conceive and produce, that discouragement wins the day, and I no longer have the heart to attempt anything.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Are you jealous of me?

GRANACCI: Not in the least.

MICHAEL ANGELO: There lies the trouble. What! you, an artist, you stand before another's work and admire it, and are not jealous? You do not beat your breast with rage, you do not curse the day when this enemy discovered and appropriated what is yours? You are an artist, and so lukewarm a devotee of the Muse that you see her bestow her favours on someone else without going mad with rage and indignation? What honey, what milk, what insipid sugared cordial runs in your veins instead of blood? Do you not know that it is by frenzy, rage, indignation, violence that men climb up to heaven? You may well smile! I do not tell you to run after me with a stiletto in your hand, but I could find it possible for you to loathe me, and I should love you all the more for it. Stiffen yourself, become a man; I will teach you all I know, I will show you what I can. Come, Granacci, form for yourself some fiery resolve! Sit down there! Work! Nothing

but work and the intoxication of creating can give life savour. In itself, life is worth nothing!

GRANACCI: I will do what you wish, save that I will not be jealous of you. I should be a laughing-stock even to myself. Have you heard the news?

MICHAEL ANGELO: I take no interest in news.

GRANACCI: A new Pope has been elected, the Piccolomini. His name now is Pius III.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Since he is Pope, he must be respected.

GRANACCI: They say that Cesare Borgia. . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO: I care nothing for the Borgia, or the Sforza, or anyone. I am an artist, and can see in the world nothing but my work, and above all, the Holy Faith. I forbear to enquire why the Lord God (blessed be His name!) has put into the world so many princes, captains, and podestàs who devour one another. They should have no other occupation than to perform virtuous acts, to punish vice and to protect the arts. What they do is the very reverse. . . . God ought to suppress them. It is true, however, that we should then fall into the hands of the populace, the foulest beast that ever crawled the ground. Have you ever known a man of no birth to become a good artist?

GRANACCI: I never considered the point.

MICHAEL ANGELO: If my family were not sprung from the Counts of Canossa, I should not be what I am. I wish these upstarts could be forbidden, on pain of death, ever to dare to touch a chisel or a chalk. Believe me, the world is horrible. The mere thought of its baseness is galling beyond endurance. . . . The day is waning; the light grows too dim for work. Let us walk by the riverside, and then we will spend the evening in reading Dante.

NAPLES.

The Viceroy's Palace.—A room richly decorated with paintings and gildings.—Before a table, covered with gold-tasselled red velvet, and seated in armchairs of brocade with carved backs, the Viceroy Don Gonsalvo de Cordova and Don Cesare Borgia, facing each other. They shake hands.

DON CESARE: I place every confidence in your Excellency.

DON GONSALVO: It is not misplaced.

DON CESARE: You are a great captain, the glory of this age. The honour of your name is a warranty for my safety.

DON GONSALVO: You do me justice.

DON CESARE: Of late I have seen nothing but flagrant infamy. I had consented to give up to the Cardinals of the Conclave the Vatican and Fort St. Angelo, the keys to my mastery of Rome, and I thereby showed so striking a moderation as cannot be impugned even by my enemies. Yes, Don Gonsalvo, if I have left Rome, it was of my own free will. After this generous act, the promises made to me were not kept. Besides, the Cardinal d'Amboise has behaved like a fool in removing his army before the fine phrases of Giuliano della Rovere. The della Rovere did not fail to secure the election of Piccolomini, who only lived twenty-two days longer, and then he took the tiara himself. In this ambitious, violent, false, perfidious and rapacious Julius II. you and I have a most implacable foe. Through his intrigues, my subjects in the Romagna have risen in revolt. Moreover, the Venetians have taken my greatest stronghold; the fortune of war has deserted me; I have been imprisoned and set at liberty. The French behaved disgracefully towards me. I have served them too long and too well. To-day I am yours, I work for you and the King, your master, and you may reckon on me as I reckon on you. Have I the right?

DON GONSALVO: I implore your Highness to be convinced of that. Besides, you have my word, Don Cesare.

DON CESARE: This assurance is most welcome and consoles me for all my misadventures. Once more, I ask

for nothing but to serve you well, and since you entrust me with troops to act in Tuscany on behalf of the Medici, you must not doubt that I am applying myself to the task with all my might, taking account henceforth of no interests but those of the Catholic King.

DON GONSALVO: I am extremely indebted to you for your trouble.

DON CESARE: My intention is to embark this very day on His Majesty's galleys, which are in the harbour, and I take my leave of you.

DON GONSALVO: God be with you, your Highness, and may His Almighty Power guide you!

DON CESARE: I again thank your Excellency for having been a friend to me in my hour of tribulation.

They rise.

I beg you, Don Gonsalvo, to esteem me as your most devoted servant.

DON GONSALVO (embracing him): It is an honour that touches me deeply.

DON CESARE: May Heaven preserve your Excellency!

The ante-chamber of the Viceroy's room. At the moment when Don Cesare comes out from Don Gonsalvo's room, the courtiers, officers and apparitors rise and take off their hats.

DON NUNEZ CAMPEIO (Captain of the Viceroy's body-guard, to Don Cesare): Monsignor, I arrest you in His Majesty's name!

DON CESARE (recoiling a few steps): What means this? . . . I am the Viceroy's friend! I have his word!

DON NUNEZ CAMPEIO: Here is his order. Read!

DON CESARE (examining the parchment): It is black treachery!

DON NUNEZ CAMPEIO: You should be a good judge of that. Your sword!

DON CESARE (casting his eyes round and seeing nothing but Spaniards): Never did man commit such an outrage! . . .
DON NUNEZ CAMPEIO: Except—you, at Sinigaglia. Your sword, I say, your Highness! or will it have to be taken from you?

Don Cesare throws his sword violently to the ground; it is picked up. The Duke is led away by soldiers.

A COURTIER (to a person dressed in black writing busily on his knees): What are you doing there, Signor Sannazaro? Can this scene have put you in a poetic vein?
SANNAZARO: In considering this great criminal, I suddenly recalled his motto: *Aut Cæsar aut nihil*, and I have composed this distich.
THE COURTIERS: Show it us!
SANNAZARO (reading):

Omnia vincebas, sperabas omnia, Cæsar;
Omnia deficiunt, incipis esse nihil.*

THE COURTIERS: Charming! What wit!

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* "Cesare, to gain all, conquer all you thought:
Now all is failing: you are henceforth naught."—Tr.

ROME.

The Palazzo Borgia.—Doña Maria Henriquez, widow of Giovanni Borgia, Duke of Gandia; her daughter Doña Isabella Borgia; a Dominican.

DOMINICAN: Yes, your Grace, and at once the Viceroy, Don Gonsalvo de Cordova, put him on board His Majesty's galleys and sent him to Spain, where we are assured that, if he is not put to death, he will be condemned to a lifelong imprisonment.

DUCHESS: May God pardon him . . . pardon his crimes! There are few in the unhappy nature of man with which he is not soiled. . . . I have never known in him either a hesitation about wrongdoing or a temptation to repent. He has never, until this hour, grasped the sole virtue of Hell—the certainty that God will win the day. Alas! Father I ask you . . . before entering the cloister, you knew something of life. . . . It is no plebeian blood that runs in your veins. . . . I ask you. . . . What is a family like ours doing in the world? It soils it! Our house issued from crime, has been carried on by crime, wallowed in crime, borne away by the most furious, the frothiest, the muddiest waves of crime, and behold it now cast down! Where is our insolent prosperity? Nowhere! All in ruin! No more clarions, no more triumphs, no more curses. . . . We have become a sight for the mob; is our example an edifying one?

DOMINICAN: Yes, Madam, although otherwise than you imagine.

DOÑA ISABELLA BORGIA: You, Madam, and you, Father, let me explain my feelings to you. True, I am but sixteen, and I ought to listen to you without saying a word, in suitable humility; but I must submit to you what I feel to-day, when we have begun to approach the most dire possibilities. My uncle, Don Cesare, murdered my father. . . . What else he did I do not clearly know, and I have no wish to learn. It is enough for me to behold under a mournful shadow a red and funereal halo which seems to emanate from our name. I know not how, and yet I wish to explain to you

the feeling inspired in me by this sight. . . . This sight, I tell you and fully believe it, the impression I get from this sight, my mother's ceaseless tears, all these trouble me less perhaps than it should. My reason urges me to be profoundly sad, but I am not. The only effect upon me of these miseries is to detach me completely, though without hatred or scorn or irritation, from this world, where such things are done and where the aspect of punishment and the continual experience of victories gained by evil cannot arrest that evil and make it reflect. I do not hate the world! It does not frighten me; it is nothing to me! I do not touch it at any point; I do not know if it surrounds me; but it has no power over me; and when I think of it, I receive a sort of impression of pure joy, because I understand that I have nothing in common with what it loves or desires.

DUCHESS: Yet all the same, we are among the worst children of this evil world; our flesh belongs to it and is at every moment pierced by its thorns.

DOMINICAN: Thus from the same objects you both derive widely different moral nutrition. As for you, Madam, the blows of villainy have fallen on you and left the indelible traces of fear and pain. You, Doña Isabella, have heard stories, but in yourself you have not felt the pang. Only the echo of villainy has reached you. This is how the deeds of men, in their weakness, seize merely upon a narrow circle; they last but the time of a lightning flash, leaving behind a vibration which gradually grows weaker and disappears. Their ravages gain little ground, and what remains after them . . . . what remains is . . . . do you know? . . . The eternal splendour of life! This light, there is no Satanic excess that can ever succeed in extinguishing it! Behold you both, one downcast in renunciation, the other joyous in detachment, both in a word, marching equally towards the unchangeable region of the good and the true.

DUCHESS: We, we two, Father? You forget from what an awful cavern we came!

DOMINICAN: That is the most wonderful mystery in the universe and the very hub of its existence. The electuary is an extract of the viper's venom, and from soil compounded of filthy substances the rarest blooms raise their exquisite petals! For me, for all this people of Rome which, for so many years, has gazed on you, do you not think that your mere presence is a benefaction? In feeling such different impressions produced by the name that you bear, do you mistake the intention of Providence? And when men exclaim with rage and horror: "Cesare Borgia!" is it a matter of indifference that they add with tenderness, with the tears of love in their eyes: "Maria and Isabella Borgia"? Ah, Madam, ah, my daughter, there is no lack of fools who, seeing Alexander VI. crowned with the tiara and Savonarola dragged to execution, cry out that there is no God! If I were to answer them, when I look upon you, "No! but there exists no evil," would my reasoning not be worth as much as theirs? There is evil, there is good, and good gains the upper hand; it makes less noise, it does not strut or make parade or howl or strain itself in order to invade the first ranks, but it is present, it acts, and it will be the hand which in the last resort will bless the work of the Seven Days!

DOÑA ISABELLA (kneeling before her mother): Don't weep, Madam! I implore you, don't shake your head! The Padre speaks true! It grieves me to see you suffer so! Yet . . . I confess . . . I have heaven in my heart! . . . God is so great! . . . Believe me! . . . Evil . . . it is so trifling a thing!

DUCHESS (wiping her eyes): We must pray for this unhappy man, and in his name will give bountiful alms.

DOÑA ISABELLA (kissing her mother, and undoing her necklace): I'll give all my jewels.

DOMINICAN: Give them, my daughter. What I see outweighs all the misdeeds of the criminal.

IN SPAIN.

VIANA.

The Navarrese troops besiege the city.—It is night; snow and rain.—At the angle of the trench, towards the Plaza, a sentry; the sky is so dark that he is scarcely visible.—An ensign, with some soldiers, relieving the watches.

ENSIGN: Is it finished?

A CORPORAL: One sentry still remains. There he is, yonder.

ENSIGN: A devil of a night! I can see nothing. It's as cold as sin. Forward!

SENTRY: Who goes there?

ENSIGN: Navarrese! . . . Halt! . . . The countersign! . . . Sant' Iago!

SENTINEL: And Pampeluna! You don't recognise me, Don Michele?

ENSIGN: That voice! . . . Is it possible? . . . Corporal, bring the lantern! . . . So it is you, Monsignor?

SENTRY: I am Cesare Borgia.

ENSIGN: How low we are fallen! . . . And I your superior officer! . . . What a misfortune!

SENTRY: So long as we live, we advance and we may climb up again!

ENSIGN: You are not discouraged?

SENTRY: No—enraged! . . . They opened my prison, thinking me harmless. How wrong they are! . . . France forsook me and stripped me. . . . Italy boasts in the belief I am dead! . . . Ah, holy vengeance!

ENSIGN: For myself, I don't think of vengeance. I ask no more than to earn my bread and to eat it without making a noise. Do likewise. Believe me, we are beaten!

SENTRY: Faint heart! So long as I have breath in my body, it is a breath of hatred and of appetite.

ENSIGN: Much good may it do you! You will break your last teeth. . . . Meanwhile, I am relieving you; come and

warm yourself. Here's daybreak; the enemy is recommencing to fire upon us.

A shot from a falconet from a bastion strikes the sentry full in the body.

Blood of Christ! There he is down! . . Don Cesare! . . . He is dead! . . . Crushed in the mud like a worm, he, the proudest of fields! . . . A thousand million devils! . . . We won't stay here. . . . Let us go and warm ourselves!

The ensign and his soldiers depart; camp-followers seize the sentinel's body, strip it naked and throw it into a ditch.

END OF THE SECOND PART

THIRD PART

JULIUS II.

ROME.

1503.

A room in the Vatican.—Julius II. ; Il Bramante.

JULIUS II.: You are only an artist; but I who comprehend all the energy that is needed in the soul in order to create beings of stone and endow them with the breath of life, I will speak to you as to my equal.

IL BRAMANTE: I, too, Holy Father, understand the work of which you are thinking.

JULIUS II.: You realise the difficulty of restoring order in the midst of the ruins that have accumulated in Italy through centuries of savagery and the abominations of my predecessor. This wretched country is more soiled than the stables that required a Hercules. Amid the crumbling stones, the brambles, the poisonous grasses, serpents and toads bask in comfort and puff themselves out, and nevertheless, Bramante, these ruins, these impure undergrowths, are the hallowed remains of a magnificent past! I wish to transmute them into a paradise as fair as that of Holy Scripture.

IL BRAMANTE: Such a work would cover its author with glory.

JULIUS II.: But you and I are old. It is late to accomplish the task. Our time is limited—we are forced to make haste. We must think out our designs at one burst, realise them at a stroke, without hesitating, without waiting, and with these hands that we have, hands that old age will soon make palsied. Let us create as much and as quickly as possible, stable and good and strong things, crushing the evil things that need stamping out. Aid me with all your heart and with all your power.

IL BRAMANTE: I devote myself to it heart and soul. May heaven chastise me if I regret my toil!

JULIUS II.: While I exterminate what remains of the petty tyrants of the Romagna and establish for ever the power of the Holy See, yes, while I lose no opportunity, I swear to you, of uprooting the barbarians from our midst, of repulsing the

Spaniards as well as the French, the Germans as well as the Swiss, and that with fire, sword, excommunication and all the thunders of the anathemas. . . . I shall spare neither violence nor scruples! For, mark me well, my son! There are certain ages when scruples are good for the confessional and frankly criminal elsewhere, since virtue only consists in success. . . . While, I tell you, I spare nothing, I charge you, Bramante, to act in such a way that the fire of the spirit becomes a pile so flaming that the ignorance and coarseness of former ages is consumed therein. The flame must blaze up so high that posterity will perceive it like a beacon that may guide it for ever.

IL BRAMANTE: A world overflows from your head into mine. Your ideas cry out to me: Work, Bramante!

JULIUS II.: Obey them, and as I have not sent for you to lose time in digressions, listen to my projects. The Vatican is too small! It is not a palace worthy of the Sovereign Pontiff of the Christians, of this successor of the Apostle who opens and shuts the gates of worlds. I need a lodging fitted to strike the nations with amazement and awe. So you will build me here two long and sumptuous galleries which will cross the width of the valley and will lead to the Belvidere. You will muster there all the beauties, all the elegances, all the inventions of your art, and you will also put there all its audacities. Do not fear to do too much! Regret no expense. Remember, and never lose sight of this—that your imagination, however potent it might be, could never figure but as a dwarf by the side of the greatness of my will.

IL BRAMANTE: I shall try to exalt myself as best I can. It will be a long and painful task.

JULIUS II.: Painful? I care not for that. Long? I forbid it. You will begin at once, you will work day and night. You will give yourself no respite or peace until I tell you, "Stop!"—and I shall not tell you that! Before I die I wish to see myself what I am carrying out. When you sleep, when you eat, you are robbing me! Listen again. Rome is dis-

POPE JULIUS II.

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figured by a number of dark and unhealthy alleys. You will have them swept away. In their place, and in whatever style you please, you will design a long, broad and magnificent avenue. You will line it with palaces and sumptuous buildings.

IL BRAMANTE: Let me at least begin with the Vatican galleries; as to the rest we shall see. You alarm me.

JULIUS II.: Coward! Once more I tell you, I am old, I cannot wait. Everything must be done in a hurry. Is it my fault if men, events, the slowness of success, the embarrassment of set-backs, the interminable series of barren days, months, and years that litter human life have barred my way so long? Had I come sooner into my own, I should, perhaps, listen to your reasons, and yet . . . . no! I should carry out more! You will at once execute what I order you—it is nothing. Now here is the real task I impose on you.

IL BRAMANTE: What! Holy Father, is there yet more?

JULIUS II.: I have to do with your works and not with your tremors. At the same time as I, yes, I, this Giuliano della Rovere, who am speaking to you, make the papacy weigh so heavily on the shoulders of kings and carry it so high that the inheritance of St. Peter is worth in this world as much as that of Israel in the other—you will found here the outward sign of this supremacy. It is you, Bramante, who will build a temple acceptable for Holy Church! The old basilica, like the old Vatican, is no longer worthy of us. Pull down, destroy, break, tear away, and show me, in place of what you will have effaced, all that you have the power to invent.

IL BRAMANTE: I shall surround myself with the greatest artists of Italy. If only Michael Angelo were to come back! But he is too afraid of you after his insult towards you!

JULIUS II.: Of his own free will or perforce he will come back, I swear it to you. I will not have the Sistine remain unfinished.

IL BRAMANTE: In any case, I have Raphael of Urbino, and if the Buonarotti should prove obstinate. . . .

JULIUS II.: I should prove obstinate also, and your Raphael would not replace him for me. Go now, make haste, to the work! I have other business. The Venetians and the French are at loggerheads. Now, go!

VENICE.

The crowd fills the streets and the churches.—Firing of artillery in the distance.—The Senate Hall; from the windows is seen the Piazza San Marco crowded with people.—The Senators form groups as they await the session, and discourse with gravity.

GIOVANNI CONTARINI (to those surrounding him): The situation is this: the battle of Agnadello lost, six thousand men left on the field, the Alviane grievously wounded, and all our provinces on *terra firma* vying with one another in cowardice.

PIERO BEMBO: Nothing could be truer. But citizens and peasants, when one is reduced to trusting in them, have never defended their unhappy country in any other way.

GIOVANNI CONTARINI: Agreed; so I make them no reproach, and only consider facts. Caravaggio, Bergamo, Cremona have surrendered of their own accord. Brescia did better. In order to give a pledge to the French, the inhabitants surprised the garrison and opened their gates. In brief, what took us centuries to join together and to govern, all crumbled away in a single day.

NANI: Perhaps we must take into account the fearful cruelties in which the French indulged. The nations were terror-stricken.

MARCO CONTARINI: Even were the conquerors kind-hearted, the result would have been the same. Our States in Italy lost; the Emperor entering Friuli and turning everything upside down; the Pope's army threatening us from Ravenna; the Gonzaga master of Lunato and of Asola; the

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FROM THE ERECTION OF ST. PETER'S, ROME

Duke of Ferrara in the Polesina and the French themselves under our eyes at Fusino, turning their cannon upon us. . . . You hear them! . . . Whatever words we may use, here are the facts.

NANI: Since the war of Chioggia so great a peril has never struck the Republic.

BEMBO: What is worse, we are not as good as our fathers. They showed themselves indomitable, and I fear that we are losing our heads.

GIOVANNI CONTARINI: I am not of your opinion. The Ten have the necessary calm. What is that noise on the staircase?

NANI: It is the procurator, Paolo Barbo, being brought in an armchair.

PIERO BEMBO: It is ten years since he appeared in the Senate; he is bent with age and half paralytic.

GIOVANNI CONTARINI: He foresaw your suspicions, Messer Bembo, and proves by his coming that the patricians of Venice, in the presence of the French, are what their ancestors, the Senators of Rome, were in the presence of the Gauls.

NANI: Here is the most serene Prince and the Signiory. Let us take our places, gentlemen.

ON THE PIAZZA SAN MARCO.

A MERCHANT (stopping a Senator as he passes): My lord, may I speak to you?

SENATOR: Be quick, Messer Antonio. I am afraid I shall be late for the session.

MERCHANT: My lord, the merchants of the Rialto learnt that the most serene Senate has offered the Republic the fortunes of all its members; they do the same with theirs. Let our chests be fetched away; they are full, and we give them with all our hearts.

SENATOR: I thank you, Signor Antonio, and the Signiory will be informed of your offers. For the present, I advise you to go home and induce your friends to do likewise. Idle curiosity and useless agitation must be left to the lower classes. Honest burghers should never cease from their business, whatever may happen. To stand in the piazzas is disorder, and disorder is the very extreme of evil.

CITIZEN: You are right, my lord. Come, Messer Girolamo, and you, my nephew, let us go home. The care of saving the State belongs to wiser heads.

Exeunt. The Senator enters the Palazzo.

A CONSTABLE (masked, to a group of fishermen and boatmen): Go to the arsenal, all of you! Men are being enlisted there for the navy.

A SAILOR: We should like to know what the illustrious Senate is going to decide.

CONSTABLE: It has already been decided that you will be whipped if you remain playing the vagabond like this instead of helping your country. Come, my lads, enough of gossiping. Be off!

THE CROWD: Long live St. Mark!

A barque arrives, swiftly rowed, and comes alongside of the steps of the landing-stage. The provveditore Andrea Gritti and several men-at-arms land. At this moment the Senate is coming out.

GIOVANNI CONTARINI: What! you, Andrea? How did you manage to pass the French lines?

GRITTI: I had to pass them.

BEMBO: What news?

GRITTI: Excellent! You build mills, I see cisterns being hollowed out; the wheat is plentiful; the sluices of the canals are raised. If the danger is great, the resolution is no less; God is with our country!

NANI: The Senate is about to congratulate your general for not having despaired of fortune.

GRITTI: A just and wise measure. The Count of Petigliano did all he could at Agnadello, and his defeated troops are already rallied. We shall hold our ground as long as we can.

CONTARINI: The Ten are sitting. They have just sent ambassadors to the Pope, praying him to abandon the league. What are the French doing at Fusino!

GRITTI: Mere fooleries. They amuse themselves by firing at the Campanile, knowing that their bullets will never get half-way. They call that insulting us.

CONTARINI: Come, come! The country won't die! To see you alive and erect, honest Gritti, and to shake your hand after the perils that have spared you of late, that is indeed a mark of divine protection.

GRITTI (with tears in his eyes): Long live St. Mark!

He goes into the Palazzo with his suite. The senators depart.

BOLOGNA.

The Pope's room.—Julius II.; cardinals, bishops, chamberlains, officers of the Swiss and Italian Guards.

JULIUS II. (he is seated in an armchair, holding in his hands a stick which he raps on the ground whenever his discourse grows heated): Ah! how happy I feel here! Now the Bolognese are brought back to reason! Let them try to kick once more, and the needle will enter their flesh a little more deeply! Henceforth, they belong to the Church. Let them try not to forget that. You will convey them my words. . . . Now, call in Michael Angelo Buonarotti. . . . Ah, here you are! . . . At last! . . . It is well! . . . Had I not threatened to go and look for you myself at Florence, you would not have come back.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Most Holy Father, I thought that you had no need of me.

JULIUS II.: Oh, you thought so? . . . I should be glad to know what gave you that idea. Explain yourself freely, without any fear. I fancy *you* are not afraid of me.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I am afraid of you, Holy Father, but the truth is the truth.

JULIUS II.: Oh, you are afraid of me? Well, act as if it were of no consequence. Whatever put it into your head to fly from Rome, when you know quite well that I wished you to stay there?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Holy Father, while I was working at the same time at the Sistine frescoes and at your statues, and when I had just finished the Moses of which your Holiness seemed to approve. . . .

JULIUS II.: Oh, I seemed to you to approve of your Moses? . . . I seemed to you. . . . Ah, I seemed to you. . . . But go on . . . never mind!

MICHAEL ANGELO: I asked for marbles; I got them. It was necessary to pay the sailors, and while they were landing the blocks at Ripa, I came to ask your Holiness for the money required.

JULIUS II.: I was busy with my affairs in the Romagna! They are settled, and I shall not let go of what I hold. All the world must know that; the least that can be expected is that the interests of the Church should come before . . . But, no—never mind, again! Explain yourself.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Holy Father, you are angry; I prefer to say nothing.

JULIUS II.: It is somewhat strange that when I order you to speak, you make me repeat myself twice.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Well then, since I am compelled, I will say that you did not receive me. I paid for your marbles out of my own pocket, and I had but little money.

JULIUS II.: Am I responsible for your foolish extravagance, sir?

MICHAEL ANGELO: I drink water and eat bread. My clothes are not worth ten crowns. You take me for your Raphael.

JULIUS II.: I take you for . . . No matter! no matter! . . . Go on!

MICHAEL ANGELO: I returned even three times. At the third, a lackey insolently told me that I might as well be patient, seeing that he had the order never to admit me. When he was asked if he knew to whom he was speaking, he answered: I know very well; but I obey His Holiness.

JULIUS II.: And then, what did you answer? Let me see! Some repartee must have come to your tongue! You are not as patient as sometimes even . . . But . . . no! Well, what did you answer?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Well, I answered . . . .

JULIUS II.: You answered: "When the Pope has need of me, he will know that I have gone elsewhere."

MICHAEL ANGELO: That is true.

JULIUS II.: Oh, it is true? Go on.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I have nothing to add. You know the circumstances as well as I do. I at once sold my furniture to the Jews and left for Florence.

JULIUS II.: Well, and what did I do then? For, so far as I know, I am not accustomed to put up with disrespect. I must have done something.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I cannot understand what pleasure your Holiness finds in torturing me thus. You know better than I do what you did.

JULIUS II.: Will you finish?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Since you drive me to it—this is what you did. You sent me five couriers, one after another, ordering me to return without delay under penalty of disgrace; but I am not minded to be treated as a man of so little worth. I begged you to look for another sculptor.

JULIUS II.: It is true that he pushed audacity so far as to send me a message in these very terms. But continue.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Messer Piero Soderini notified me that the Signiory had received three briefs ordering me to return to Rome under pain of excommunication. Hence I had to go—I went, and here I am.

JULIUS II.: So that you did not come back of your own free will? And some gossips go telling everywhere, into the bargain, that you wanted to kill me by throwing rafters on my head from the top of your scaffolding on the Sistine, where I had entered in spite of you! I ask you now what prince is so soft, so easygoing, so stupid that he will suffer such outrages without taking vengeance.

A moment's silence.

A BISHOP: Holy Father, your Holiness will deign to take pity on this poor man. He knows not what he is doing. Such people have little understanding and are entirely ignorant outside their art.

JULIUS II. (rising in fury and beating the bishop with his staff): Tactless fool! Pedant! Idiot! Why do you permit yourself to insult my artist? Did *I* insult him, eh? Let this wretch, this ass, this blockhead, go home! And you,

Michael Angelo, come here—come nearer—come! On your knees. . . . Here is my blessing. . . . Kiss the ring of the Fisherman! Be not vexed, my son, go and work. I will give you all the money I can. Make me many beautiful things! You are indeed a creative god. Go, my son—never think again of leaving me. You are the glory of the Pope and of Italy.

Michael Angelo rises, crosses himself bows and goes out.

A CHAMBERLAIN: The Venetian Ambassadors have come back for the third time since this morning. They entreat your Holiness to receive them.

JULIUS II.: They are bold! Do they not know that I refused?

CHAMBERLAIN: They had express orders, Holy Father!

JULIUS II.: These Venetians! Italians but not of Italy, Christians against their will! They wished to wrest the Romagna from me and forced me in spite of myself to join hands with the French! Behold them now, reduced to the last extremity; what do they want now?

A VENETIAN CARDINAL (aside to the Pope): Holy Father, the Ambassadors are charged with every possible submission. These are the points which you demanded and which they grant: public penitence for having offended you, abandonment of the benefices depending on the State. . . . We cede you Ferrara, and the right of sailing in the Adriatic without having to pay tolls.

JULIUS II. (aside): These are good dispositions. Bring in your deputies. If we can come to an understanding, not only shall I give up the alliance with the French, but you will help me to rid Italy of them.

CARDINAL: Yes, Holy Father.

JULIUS II.: Let the Ambassadors come to find me to-night. I refuse to receive them in public. It is not yet time.

ROME.

A garden, cypresses, banks of rose-trees ; a marble bench amid grasses and flowers ; behind the bench an antique statue of Venus.—Raphael, a lady.

LADY : I love you more than you think, and in another way.

RAPHAEL : I believe that you love me well. If I requite it to you, or rather if I give you love and your heart only reflects to me, in charming flashes, like a faithful mirror, the tenderness that I shower upon you, is that not enough?

LADY : Raphael, you do not understand me. I love you for my own part, and so entirely that I am amazed how little you understand it.

RAPHAEL : My dear love, why do you speak thus?

LADY : It grieves me that a soul like yours should fail to see the really precious favours heaped upon it, and linger over what is less worthy of itself and of me. Why would you not allow me this pride of believing that my affection is worth more than my beauty?

RAPHAEL : I think it is, more than you can desire. Am I of a mind so base as to remark in you nothing but the fire of your great splendid eyes, the soft roundness and brilliance of your cheeks, the half-open pomegranate of your lips and the suppleness of that incomparable figure? Do not believe it! I understand also, and at least as well, how noble and generous is your soul, and to what a point rises that intellect, so justly compared by more than one poet to the bold flight of the bird which bears Jupiter into the bosom of the Empyrean. If I had to paint a noble Sibyl, it is you that I should choose ; the divine laurel wreathed about your brows would never have pressed a worthier brow! Who does not recognise in you the brilliant pupil of the most sublime philosopher—yes, the daughter of Plato? Have you not been seen, before an assembly of sages in transports of admiration and pleasure, the day when you commented on the "Phædo" with an eloquence worthy of the orators of Athens and of Rome? Oh, most beautiful, most learned, most inspired, and

RAFFAELE SANTI (RAPHAEL)

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at the same time most seductive of women, why do you think that I misunderstand you?

LADY: I am not what you say; I am she who loves Raphael and is perhaps loved by him in return.

RAPHAEL: Perhaps?

LADY: No glory could be greater than that. Is it not natural that I should think sometimes that this Raphael, at this moment on the plane of eternal happiness, seated at my feet on this grass that sparkles like emeralds, his arm on my knee, his fine hair, his charming head so tenderly pressed between my hands which . . . you feel, do you not? . . . tremble with a thrill of the deepest felicity—yes, if I think sometimes that this Raphael, perceiving and esteeming too much in me the element that cannot endure, does not think enough of my undying devotion! Look at me . . . look at me closely . . . yes . . . look at me thus. . . . What do you find, what do you see in the sincerity of my eyes, save the ceaseless expression of my passion for your triumphs, your glory, the enhancement of your genius?

RAPHAEL: Heaven forbid that I should not understand! Frivolous attachments, my beloved, inconstant desires, passing caprices are the beams of a sun that will soon set. They give little warmth or light, but brighten charmingly the ordinary stages of existence. He who enjoys them is not wrong. They are like fruits, bunches of grapes, clusters of cherries, green and luscious figs, hanging from the end of a bough under the gleaming foliage. The joyous passer-by would be wrong not to taste of them if he can take them, and not to gaze at them with longing if he cannot reach. Yet do not imagine that I devote myself to searching long for the innumerable gifts displayed everywhere before the transitory appetite of the birds of heaven! My folly, or rather my weakness of heart, is not great enough for that.

LADY: That is well said, Raphael. I feared that this was not your opinion.

RAPHAEL: You do not know me well, if you suspected me

of such a narrowness of imagination and of heart. Suffer me to be a child that laughs and laughs. . . .

LADY: Like a brook that, as it runs over the pebbles, casts before the echoes the pearls of its laugher. Who would blame you? Is it I that would blame you, dear child?

RAPHAEL: But I know, too, what a gulf divides pleasure from happiness, and when the angel of pure devotion comes and sits in his white dress, on the broken stone of the tomb whence he made life leap forth, I do not ask him, "Who are you?" for I feel in myself the power of that which he has done. Common imaginations, dull wits believe, perhaps, when they should not believe, and doubt when they have no right to doubt. They take the small for the great, the great for the formless and . . . You! Never think for that I misunderstand you! Do not imagine that the nobleness of your nature is a light invisible to me, that my eyes are blind. I know what you are, I feel your worth, I accept what you give me and I weigh fairly all the good that comes to me therefrom. . . . It is your lover, your true lover who speaks to you . . . but also your friend! My soul! It is your companion—what more can I say—it is your equal! He hears his equal speaking and listens to her advice as it deserves.

LADY: My eyes are filled with tears . . . but such sweet tears! I know not how to thank you for it! How have I been so good that heaven has given you to me? By what have I deserved this? In truth, I know not.

RAPHAEL: Nor I either—I know not by what good works I have been empowered to buy you, my treasure; but why look for causes? Are we less happy because we do not know our happiness?

LADY: You said so just now. I am a daughter of Plato, and I take delight in searching the origins of heavenly things.

RAPHAEL: Flowers are better than seeds, and fruits than flowers.

LADY: You are the man of that which has blossomed, of that which is ripe, of that which can be seen, tasted and

relished. You do not feel inclined to take a lyre to pieces to find in its sonorous interior the precise spot where the sound is formed.

RAPHAEL: That is true. Heaven did not assign me that task. Still, do not accuse me of despising all that lies beneath the surface. When science helps to develop life itself, I give it its full due. But I am not greatly prone to those obscure studies that aim at tracking down secrets which it is, after all, not very expedient to unravel. In reality, I love what is touched and bathed by the light of the sun—the rest has for me a secondary importance.

LADY: Yes, in that adored head reigns light, dazzling and omnipresent. Truth can be seen there without difficulty, and error finds no place for its shadows.

RAPHAEL: You are mistaken. I have never spontaneously, by myself, alone, recognised what had to be found. Someone always showed me my way, and it is only when a strange hand has stripped the images, that I must contemplate, of the clothes which hide them from me, that I catch sight of them, and from that moment I see them clearly.

LADY: What do you mean?

RAPHAEL: Had I not gone out one day from Perugino's workshop, never to return, I should never in my life have understood anything but what he showed me. When I was at Florence, the sight of Masaccio revealed to me what I should never have seen but for that master; it was still nothing. I did not really forsake the swaddling-clothes of infancy until I came to the studio of Baccio d'Agnolo, living all the day with the great artists, Andrea Sansovino, Filippino Lippi, Benedetto da Majano, il Cronaca, Francesco Granacci, hearing from each what he knew, what he was (so to speak) discovering at every hour, in the world of his dreams, whether he were sculptor, painter or architect. When I was thus prepared and had detached and shaken off the wrappings of early childhood and my limbs became free, it was then, and then only, that I was able to understand the lessons offered by the great

Lionardo to me, to each of us, to all future ages. You see: I am not myself the fountain-head whence flows the stream of my art, and without reckoning the examples of antiquity, many others have served as a rule, a guide, a source for what you call my genius.

LADY: Well! you are not like Pallas Athene, that sprang fully-armed from the brain of a god. You are hardly yet a man; the beauty of your face still keeps many of those almost feminine contours, the flowers of adolescence. No one could be surprised if you first had to listen to the opinions of your precursors and behold and estimate their discoveries. But now you know all. Achilles has no need of the lessons of the Centaur, nor my Alexander of the admonitions of Aristotle. What was placed in your hands has borne fruit; you know more than Perugino, more than Masaccio, more than Lionardo, more than all the rest together, and you are only beginning life. The whole world will learn from you, and you will learn nothing from anyone.

RAPHAEL: You are wrong once more. I shall always learn, and from the whole world. Do you wish me to confess to you in what respect I consider myself perhaps happier than my forerunners? In this: each of them remained shut up in a circle. He knew the artists of his city, and had no other company. He believed, like you, that native talent has no limits and is enough for attaining any result. Nothing is more untrue. I shall be great, I who am your Raphael, because I learn everywhere and from all; I never cease from investigating. It is of little moment to me to rummage under the roots of the fruit-tree—that all possess—but I want the tree and I want the fruits, and that is why, beloved, I am I. . . .

LADY: You are grace, you are charm, you are everything. . . .

RAPHAEL: No, I repeat, I am not everything. I am reason, perhaps. I am moderation. I am good judgment. I am, if you will, wisdom and enlightened taste; but I am not depth, and above all I am not sublimity.

LADY: Who, then, is both these last?

RAPHAEL: Michael Angelo.

LADY: Michael Angelo? That sombre, gloomy, narrow, obscure, tortured soul? . . . You cannot think so, Raphael! To compare such a man to yourself! He resembles a demon of darkness, while you are the image of the archangel whose name you bear. What whim of modesty has taken hold of you now?

RAPHAEL: If I could dive down into that melancholic soul, I should bring up many smoke-grimed secrets from which he can fashion gleaming gold. Vulcan, too, was a deformed god, covered with soot, living in the ruddy slag of his Lemnian smithy. Yet none of the gods that walked the azure ways, neither Phoebus of the sun nor Mercury the flute-player, were ever as mighty craftsmen as he!

LADY: No! You are wrong! There is nothing in common between the overflowing life that is poured from your nature into your works, a lovable and inspiring force, and the savage brutality of him whom you seem to envy.

RAPHAEL: Had I not copied as his pupil, as the most attentive and humble of pupils, the inimitable cartoon of Pisa; had not my uncle Bramante, in letting me secretly into the Sistine chapel, given me the inestimable happiness of gazing on the creations of this all-powerful artist, I should not be what I am, I could not even dream of what I might achieve. Why do you lower your head? I shall execute greater and nobler things than he, although he is a greater inventor than I. He discovers, he knows how to discover; but it is not granted him to separate silver from lead, or a thousand stains of rust from the purity of his thought. As for me, beloved, perhaps I am not the equal of him, the Jehovah of a world; I have taken from all parts and from every hand; what is mine has belonged to others. But then, I have enlarged, uplifted, illuminated everything! I am one who sets in order! I have not trifled with copying one, stealing from another, meanly adjusting the shreds and patches secretly borrowed from everyone, which everyone had the right to reclaim later on.

No! I melted all together, and from these dissimilar elements I created a force at a single bound. It is from matter that is compact and really my own that I am preparing, henceforth, to compose my works, ever adding to it; this matter is mixed according to my own views, coloured as it suits me, hard at the exact point that I wish; and it is thus that I shall rear monuments on which I will imprint my seal and my right, which none will dispute. You see, I praise myself in order to re-assure you and to please you. But I show you my mind as God has made it, and not as in the distorted image called up by passionate love. I do not magnify myself nor yet make myself smaller. And I have, above Michael Angelo and the rest, a prerogative of which you do not speak to me, and which alone is worth more than all that they possess.

LADY: I know it, I see it, I feel it!

RAPHAEL: And what is it, pray? Is it so manifest?

LADY: Ah, how manifest! How it sparkles in your glances, how it is discernible in your face, in that god-like grace that animates your every movement! Your prerogative, my Raphael, is to be happy! You are happy! Happiness spread her rose-coloured veil above your mother's bed at the moment of your birth. From your first step, from your first smile, you were beloved. It seems as if the years that, in linked chain, form your life, have known no season but spring. You have thought, you have meditated, you have worked, you always work; but what is trouble for others is always transmuted for you into easy pleasure. You do not know what it is to work against the grain. You have been loved, I said. You are loved! The great, princes, popes, most honoured ladies, adore Raphael; if old, they treasure him like a cherished son, and, if in the bloom of youth, they do as I do—they idolise him! I am not astonished to see you express candour, virtue, innocence, and charm so well. . . . Evil has been forbidden to come near you, and as you have never known anything but love, how could you be other than what you are? Farewell

. . . . farewell, my friend; farewell, my lover. . . . Farewell, my idol.

RAPHAEL: You are going already?

LADY: Already? Yes, it is already . . . . it is too soon! . . . Nevertheless, I have been here since this morning; the sun is going down, and the gold of its rays seems to be drowned in the gleaming purple of its dying fires. Besides, I hear voices at the end of the garden. Your friends are coming to look for you. I would not have them meet me.

RAPHAEL: Stay a moment, my adored one; I wish to tell them to wait for me in my house. Do not go yet, I implore you! . . . You have made me talk of everything, but what have we said of ourselves?

LADY: Oh, that we know well enough. Farewell. . . . I see La Bianchina! She makes me a sign. My litter has long been in the lane. How rash we are!

RAPHAEL: How cruel you are!

LADY: You are ungrateful, Raphael.

RAPHAEL: Till to-morrow, then? Here? . . . at your house? On the Tiber bridge? . . . Where?

LADY: No! . . . to-morrow. . . . What's to be done? . . . Well, let us risk something! Come at ten o'clock in the morning, at the Holy Apostles; I shall go there to hear the Mass, and I shall be alone in the church with La Bianchina. Farewell!

RAPHAEL: Farewell! I worship you!

Exit Beatrice.

FRANCESCO PENNI (IL FATTORE): Master, here is the Bramante! He is coming in great haste to speak to you.

RAPHAEL: Bring me a cartoon and some chalks. Where are my pupils?

IL FATTORE: Several in the two studios; most of them in the Vatican; some are executing what you ordered on the frescoes of the hall of the Segnatura, others are going forward with the sketches of the Heliodorus. Several, also, have left

early, and are working at Signor Agostino Chigi's at the pictures of Psyche.

RAPHAEL: Let them all be sent word that I shall be there soon! I shall go to my workshops, to the Vatican, and to Signor Chigi's. Give me the chalks.

He begins the portrait of Beatrice d'Este.

IL BRAMANTE: Good-day, nephew. The Pope wishes to speak to you. He considers that the work does not advance. You will have a severe lecture to face if you are not careful.

RAPHAEL: Before anything else, I shall finish this sketch. I have it in my head! It shall not escape me. So sit down, uncle . . . here in the shade of these rose-laurels. Here is a shelter made for you. A lemonade for Signor Bramante!

IL BRAMANTE: The fact is that I am dead-tired. This life, at my age, is unbearable.

RAPHAEL: The life is admirable for you as well as for me. If it shook us less, how all would wither in our souls!

IL BRAMANTE: You are perhaps right as regards certain moments; but there are others when one can stand no more. Julius II. is an appalling master; his exactingness is on a par with his genius.

RAPHAEL: He does not spare us; but is he indulgent to himself? Assuredly not. That is something to keep us in a good temper. Here is a sketch of which I need not be ashamed, I think. It wells up in my soul and runs on like a live thing under the pencil! . . . As for the Pope, as for myself, I do my best. What has he to complain of? The hall of the Holy Signatory is almost finished; what is left will soon be done. The picture of Theology, as I composed it in accordance with the ideas of Count Castiglione and Signor Ludovico Ariosto, is finished. I shall let that of philosophy rest a while, because I have acquired a taste for the Mass of Bolsena, and the composition is of such importance to me that I shall not rest until I have brought it to a good

issue. I cannot go faster; the Holy Father has no right to complain; we are making him beautiful things.

IL BRAMANTE: That is just what irritates him, and, when I told him, he grew angry and swore that it was because he knew it that he wished to draw out of us all that we are capable of. He complains of you, he complains of Michael Angelo, of Sansovino, of Sebastiano del Piombo, of all the artists he has brought to Rome, of me, of the whole universe. He looks on human beings as nothing but tortoises; the terrestrial globe does not turn rapidly enough on its axis, and everywhere, over all, and for everyone, he would fain double and treble the movement. Meanwhile, take care; his peculiar taste inclines him towards the Buonarotti. I should not like him, under pretext of negligence on your part, to withdraw you from work to give it to that man of darkness.

RAPHAEL: Uncle, I tell you again, we do what we can. But here are some friends who condescend to visit us. Call the servants. Ho! lemonade there, fruits, cakes! seats! seats! everywhere!

Richly dressed servants bring armchairs, chairs, settees; others offer refreshments of every sort. Enter Signor di Bibbiena, Agostino and Sigismondo Chigi, the architects Baccio Pintelli and Baldassare Peruzzi; Giacomo Sansecondo, the musician; Tibaldeo, the poet; Marc-Antonio Raimondi, the engraver, and others.

AGOSTINO CHIGI: Well, master, always at work! What a charming face!

RAPHAEL: Most reverend signor, magnificent signors, my noble friends, welcome! All gay, fresh, and happy! Pray take your places! Do you allow me to continue what I have begun? I must finish to-day, and I hardly have time, because His Holiness is asking for me.

BIBBIENA: Go on, master. The moments that would be taken from you would be an odious theft from posterity, as from our own loftiest pleasures.

TIBALDEO: Is it true that His Holiness is so delighted

with your picture of Heliodorus that, unlikely though it sounds, he wishes to contemplate himself in the midst of that great court of justice and that powerful tumult of ancient days?

RAPHAEL: Very true. I did the cartoon last night. Bring it, Francesco. You will go and see it and tell me your opinion.

AGOSTINO CHIGI: The potentate who, humbling the smaller princes to the dust, plans the union of Italy under the crook of St. Peter and our deliverance for ever from the foreign spoilers, this potentate, our Pope, cannot but have been glad when he received from your hand, Raphael, the spectacle of the impious driven from the temple by the fiery sword of the angel of the Lord! He himself is that angel!

BIBBIENA: Ah, here are the cartoons!

Servants place the cartoons on the easels under the Fattore's direction.

SIGISMONDO CHIGI: The likeness of the Pope is striking.

SANSECONDO: That is his proud and overbearing mien before his foes!

PERUZZI: You recognise yourself there, Marc-Antonio? It is you who are one of the porters of the pontifical chair?

MARC-ANTONIO: I am not the only one thus honoured by Raphael. Have you seen my companion?

TIBALDEO: Per Dio! Is it not Signor Giovanni Pietro de' Foliari of Cremona?

BACCIO PINTELLI: What! the Secretary of the Memorials?

RAIMONDI: No other. The poor man is at the summit of his happiness and goes telling the tale all over the city.

BIBBIENA: He is right. You have done for him, master, what God refused us all; you made him immortal.

IL BRAMANTE: Take these cartoons with you to the Vatican. This will be the true means of soothing the Pope. Are you getting on with your sketch? It is nearly time to go; the sun is setting.

RAPHAEL: I am ready. Fattore, I beg you, my lad, have this dear head taken to my bedroom. I shall work at it this

evening when I come in. My blue velvet mantle! my biretta with ropes of pearls! Bid a dozen of my men come with me! You will accompany us! Signor Bibbiena, all of you, my friends, stay and amuse yourselves. The house is like its master, it belongs to you. Signor Agostino, I shall come to your house when I leave the Vatican. And I shall see what my pupils are doing.

AGOSTINO CHIGI: I shall run to welcome you. I also have to speak to you of the work on my chapel at Santa Maria della Pace. When will you begin it?

RAPHAEL: Next week without fail. You do not forget, Messer, that to-day is St. Anne's Day? We are supping with our worthy German Johannes Goricius.

AGOSTINO CHIGI: The Signora Imperia is bound to be there. There is thus no reason to fear that Signor Bibbiena will fail to appear.

BIBBIENA: Certainly not; I think that the same may be said of you. The Imperia has a magnet in her eyes to draw the hearts of men.

Enter a pupil of Il Bramante.

PUPIL: Maestro, hasten to the Vatican. A misfortune has happened.

IL BRAMANTE: Blood of Christ! what do you mean?

PUPIL: The wall of the new gallery of the Belvedere has just had a crack all its length, and threatens ruin.

IL BRAMANTE: How could it be otherwise? The Pope is pressing so hard! We have to work day and night, and scarcely know what we are doing!

RAPHAEL: My tale is the same. The ill-fitted plasters come off with the paintings, or being badly prepared, spoil the colours. Good-bye, sirs; I will come with you, uncle.

BIBBIENA AND THE OTHERS: Till this evening then, at the house of Goricius.

RAPHAEL (to Il Bramante, coming out of the garden):

Before all, take me once more, as you pass, to the Sistine. I must go in there. Michael Angelo has achieved miracles; I must understand them, so as not to be behindhand. What a wizard! What a master is this Buonarotti!

IL BRAMANTE: So far as portents are concerned, the greatest that he has shown me is certainly this—that he has made the Pope so pliant as to show him more consideration than he would to God the Father!

RAPHAEL: We have no cause for complaint either, uncle. We have no lack of work.

IL BRAMANTE: No one has. Julius II. has not enough arms, legs, hearts, and heads to employ for what he wishes to carry out. Nevertheless, Michael Angelo remains the favourite. Remember that!

RAPHAEL (laughing): Go and repair your cracks! Come, uncle, and you others, follow us!

Exit, his arm under Bramante's, surrounded by his pupils and his serving-men.

BEFORE BOLOGNA.

The French camp.—A group of officers ; the bivouac fires are being lighted ; a party of men-at-arms remain in the saddle ; others have dismounted to tighten the horses' girths ; some are eating snacks with their fingers. The lines of infantry are under arms.—Battalions are marching to reach their posts ; they are completing the investment of the town. Midnight. The sky is dark and moonless.—The Grand Master of Chaumont, Governor of the Milanese, in full armour, his helmet on his head ; Annibale Bentivoglio, Lord of Bologna, and his brother Hermes Bentivoglio, similarly armed ; Ives d'Alegre, French captain.

THE GRAND MASTER (to an officer): Have my orders been carried out?

OFFICER: Yes, my lord ; the town is invested. Not a rat can go in or out without our permission.

GRAND MASTER: Excellent. Let the light horse beat up the country. Let everyone remain under arms.

OFFICER: Yes, my Lord.

GRAND MASTER: Ah, that old Julius—that old fox! We hold him, the traitor! We shall catch him, and may the plague strike me dead if we do not reduce him to beg for mercy.

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: He does not deserve it. Remember how he betrayed your very reverend brother the Cardinal d'Amboise. He alone prevented him from becoming Pope.

GRAND MASTER: Do you think that I do not know that, and that I am in a mood to forgive him?

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: And from me he stole Bologna, where he has not a single friend.

D'ALEGRE: Not a single friend? That is saying too much, Signor Annibale. In your Italian cities, everyone has a friend and a comrade to help him in case of need.

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: I tell you that the populace is going to open the gates to us when it knows we are here.

GRAND MASTER: So much the better. The King will be very glad, and so will The Duke of Ferrara. The least that can happen to Julius II. is to be deposed as his predecessor would have been if he had not died. Certainly, he was no worse than the present anti-Christ.

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: He was better. The present Pope dreams of nothing but the spoliation and massacre of all the princes.

GRAND MASTER: I am thinking it over; but we must give the horses a little rest and let the men eat. (To an officer.) Give the order to dismount. The troops are to fall out after the sentries have been posted. Has Captain Molard arrived?

OFFICER: He is coming in a moment. His companies are broken with fatigue.

GRAND MASTER: They are honest fellows; let them have wine served them. You come in good time, Captain Molard. Many thanks for such promptitude.

CAPTAIN MOLARD: I have done my duty, my lord.

GRAND MASTER: You know that we hold our Master Reynard.

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: We are going to cut his tail.

HERMES BENTIVOGLIO: Or his throat.

GRAND MASTER: What news do you bring from Ferrara?

CAPTAIN MOLARD: Here is Monsignor de Bayard, who will give you some.

GRAND MASTER: Good evening, Captain Bayard, welcome.

BAYARD: Commend you to God, my lord, most devoutly. Here are some who are better men than I, the Baron da Conti, the Baron de Fontrailles, and the worthy Captain Mercurio with his two thousand Albanians.

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: Is it true that he ripped up his first cousin so well?

BAYARD: He had him cut to pieces with all his men, and the heads were carried on the lance points. It was cruel, and I dislike these savageries.

D'ALEGRE: It is not war, but butchery.

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: It is vengeance. When one risks one's own skin, one has every right over those of others.

BAYARD: I am too humble a person to argue with so great

a lord as you. For his part, Captain Mercurio is brave, no doubt. All the same, I had the looters, who stifled the poor inhabitants of Vicenza in a cavern, put to death without mercy; and everywhere that marauders come under my hand I propose to do the same to them. But are we here to tell stories?

GRAND MASTER: Not altogether. We reckon that to-morrow morning the people of Bologna will have delivered up the Pope to me. Signor Annibale has promised.

ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO: And I promise you that King Louis is about to be relieved of his excommunication, and the Duke of Ferrara, I and my friends also.

OFFICER: A guard reports that Count Giovanni Francesco Pico presents himself from the Pope to speak to Monsignor.

GRAND MASTER: Ah! so our arrival is known, and the Holy Father wishes to avoid the eagerness of his people to fly at him! Bring in the Count; I shall listen to what he has to say.

IN BOLOGNA.

A room in the palace where the Pope lives.—Julius II., ill, half lying down in an armchair, surrounded by cushions which he upsets every minute and which the servants pick up. Cardinal Regino, Legate of Bologna.

CARDINAL: You must not let yourself be taken by those villainous French.

POPE: I shall not let myself be taken. It is I who shall take and strangle and stamp upon my enemies. You may count upon that. Give me to drink!

A chamberlain brings him a glass of gruel.

Bah! it's as bitter as gall. . . . A glass of wine!

CHAMBERLAIN: Holy Father, the physicians have expressly forbidden wine.

POPE: What time did the couriers go to send my messages to the Venetians and the Spaniards?

CARDINAL: Four hours ago, at the first news that come to us of the march of the French.

POPE: The point is that our allies should be here in time. Have a letter written to the Bishop of Sion bidding him hasten his negotiations with the Swiss. Let as many of these barbarians as can be scraped together be thrown into the Milanese territory. The more harm they do to Louis XII.'s troops, the nearer will be our deliverance.

CARDINAL: The Swiss are honest numskulls; I reckon on them completely. Devoted to the Church, obedient when they are well paid——

THE POPE: Bandits like the rest! Has not Count Giovanni Francesco yet returned?

CARDINAL: Not yet. He has a skilful tongue.

POPE: He does not need much subtlety to hoodwink Louis XII. That booby would fain pass for a man of substance, because he is coarse, jovial, and weak of head as of heart. As prince, he betrayed his King; as husband he made his first wife, who was a saint, as unhappy as possible; at present, he obeys a second, who is a sheer termagant, and as for killing and plundering, there is no one who does that

more lightly than he, always with a great laugh, and they say of him: "What a jolly fellow!" Poor Italy, poor Italy, to be trampled on by such men! But the scandal will not last. An end must be made of the princelings and of those iniquitous republics, Florence, Siena, and Lucca; thus, we make use of the Aragonese, the French, the Germans, whoever comes to hand, but finally the day will dawn when the Holy Church, master of all, will shut up these wretches under a double key in the wastes which heaven has assigned as their country.

CARDINAL: The fact is that your Holiness has prepared everything marvellously well: Henry VIII. let loose upon the coasts of France; Ferdinand threatening the Pyrenees.

JULIUS II.: And all the time I am treating with Louis. While I smite and harass him, I play with him and let him think that we can come to an understanding; with one hand I excommunicate him—him and his allies, the ruffians! and with the other I caress him! . . . I shall destroy him!

CARDINAL: And here are fifteen thousand Swiss going to arrive.

JULIUS II.: And my nephew, Marc-Antonio Colonna, has got together an army; I have raised another for my Francesco Maria d'Urbino. . . . All is going fairly well. . . . Yes, but if presently the French take me by surprise, it will be an accident that might spoil our game completely! I came here a trifle hot-headedly.

CARDINAL: A little imprudently, perhaps.

JULIUS II.: Where is the time to be prudent? I must act quickly in order to accomplish much. If I am not to count upon my good luck, it were as well not to interfere with anything. Go and see if the Count is not coming back.

BEFORE BOLOGNA.

A winter night, dark and cold; day is beginning to dawn.—A peasant's house; French troops encamped around. Great bustle of patrols of infantry and cavalry; pickets and sentries everywhere. The town is invested. Lights are seen in the higher stories of some houses that command the rampart.—Near a big fire, a table between them, the Grand Master of Chaumont and Count Giovanni Francesco Pico.

COUNT: Well Monsignor, I will admit what you say. The Holy Father did not show himself so faithful as he should have done to the League of Cambray. There are many points to object to, but of them we will not speak. The Holy Father, I agree, abandoned the Most Christian King after the battle of Agnadello; he——

GRAND MASTER: He made an alliance with our worst enemies, the Venetians; he tore them from our hands when we, thinking them half-dead, were about to deliver a final blow; he detached the Emperor from our side; he is stirring up the Swiss to attack us; in short, he does us all the mischief that he can. He shall be chastised! And, by the death of Christ, let him give himself up without so much chaffering.

COUNT: How should he do otherwise? . . . When you have him, what will you do with him?

GRAND MASTER: A strong prison! Do you think there are none such? and, later on, he'll be deposed, as he richly deserves!

COUNT: You are hard. The Pope in prison? What will Christendom say and do? And you, Monsignor, the hero of this fine scandal, will you take upon yourself to give the Queen, whose piety is so well-known, the absolutions that the humblest priest will refuse her?

GRAND MASTER: The devil! Do you think you are frightening me?

COUNT: I only wish to open your eyes. What would you say if I brought you a Pope who, instead of being an embarrassing prisoner, proved a devoted friend?

GRAND MASTER: You take me for a fool. Your devoted

friend—who robbed my brother of the tiara! Do you think that is one of those actions that one forgives?

COUNT: True, but I only wanted to remind you of this axiom: that when you wish to serve both your master and yourself equally well, you nearly always go wrong. I offer you an understanding, I declare to you that we can reach one to your very great advantage. You refuse, very well; but observe that you refuse.

GRAND MASTER: I refuse nothing. I only say, and I repeat, that one cannot place the slightest confidence in you. . . . Ah, if you were a different sort of people! . . . then . . .

COUNT: Listen, for example, to what I should propose to you. . . . Withdrawal of the ban of excommunication against you and your allies. . . . Alfonso d'Este once more recognised as Duke of Ferrara, and restored to his post of Gonfalonier of the Holy Church. . . . Would not that be a good start? We should abandon the Venetians. . . . You yourself would receive a hundred thousand crowns. . . . Would an understanding be possible upon such terms?

GRAND MASTER: One must remember that you are notorious rogues . . . otherwise, do you imagine that for the small pleasure of giving myself such trouble, I should——

COUNT: I make you the formal proposal in the Holy Father's name!

GRAND MASTER: Have you plenary powers?

COUNT: Here they are.

GRAND MASTER: That would not be enough for me.

COUNT: Body of Bacchus! you are hard to deal with.

GRAND MASTER: I also require the re-instatement of Signor Annibale Bentivoglio in his town of Bologna, and a clause that the Pope shall renounce the Romagna.

COUNT: I frankly confess to you that on these matters I have no instructions, and it is probable that the Holy Father will not wish to have them broached.

GRAND MASTER: You are joking! If he refuses, I close

my fist. Is he not caught? Has he the liberty of saying "yes" or "no"?

COUNT: Perhaps we shall submit to every possible hardship; but I do not think that His Holiness will renounce either Bologna or the Romagna.

GRAND MASTER: Then, to-morrow at dawn, I shall break in your doors and put my hand on your man.

COUNT: You are really decided?

GRAND MASTER: If you knew me better, you would dispense with that question.

COUNT: In that case, and in the presence of force, I yield.

GRAND MASTER (laughing): You do well. . . . Believe me, and now that we are friends, your master will at once open me the doors. I am eager to embrace him.

COUNT: But in that case he would be your prisoner under another name.

GRAND MASTER (laughing): Take it as you will; I shall not abate that condition.

COUNT: We are in a serious dilemma. I am going to report your words to the Holy Father. He will decide. . . .

GRAND MASTER: Offer him my respects as from a submissive son of the Church.

COUNT: Now come, Monsigneur de Chaumont, could you not be less hard?

GRAND MASTER: I am only taking precautions. Your master will recognise my intentions as better than he thought. You said three hundred thousand crowns of gold?

COUNT: I said two hundred.

GRAND MASTER: It will be three hundred, if you please. When will you return?

COUNT: Give me until midnight.

GRAND MASTER: Impossible! You shall have two hours —not a minute more. We have already lost a deal of time in talking.

COUNT: My lord, my lord, I entreat you. . . We will

give the three hundred thousand crowns! but do not bring rakings-up of personal animosities into this affair!

GRAND MASTER: Just now, you threatened me indirectly with the Queen. . . . You shall see if I am intimidated! . . . Come, Count, take heart of grace! I'll grant you all the time you ask for, and two hours more into the bargain. Am I such a fiend?

COUNT: Thanks. The Holy Father will appreciate what he owes you. None the less we are in a horrible position.

GRAND MASTER: Come, come, don't be downcast. Our alliance is well worth that of Venice. You lose the Romagna by it, but who knows if you will not gain something else? You must not shake your head with that despondent look. Farewell; always remain cheerful.

COUNT: Farewell, my Lord. I shall keep the appointment.

Exit.

GRAND MASTER (alone): At bottom, he was not altogether wrong. Madam Anne is not tender in the matter of affections, and moreover, after my brother's death, my position is less secure. . . . True, the King is furious with the Pope and wishes to crush him at all costs. . . . Three hundred thousand golden crowns are an excellent thing to have, especially when the result is of a sort to satisfy the King and not annoy the Queen. . . . Julius will try to overreach me . . . but . . . it is not likely that I shall let myself be bamboozled by these false-tongued Italians. . . . I know them, thank God, and——

D'ALEGRE: You had the intention of visiting the posts, Monsignor.

GRAND MASTER: I was just going to send for you. Come!

———

Near a bivouac fire.—Captain Bayard, the bastard du Fay, standard-bearer of his artillery company; Captain Molard, Captain Sucker, leaders of French and German mercenaries; Captain Jacob Zemberg, commander of the Swiss. A rough table is drawn up near the fire and loaded with hams, sausages, chickens, bottles and cups of pewter, tin, horn, or wood. The guests are seated on benches and stools, which have been snatched from the huts. Around the table, a wind-screen constructed by the soldiers by means of cloaks piled on poles. Pinewood torches burning at the end of long stakes planted in the earth. The officers are supping, waited on by pages and lackeys.

SUCKER: In war, I think nothing but valour of consequence. For the rest I care but little.

BAYARD: In that, my friend, you do not show yourself particularly wise. I think valour of consequence, but discretion just as much, because with discretion we have discipline, of which too little has been seen in our armies up to the present.

CAPTAIN MOLARD: When one of my men plays the devil, I play the Satan, and he does not come back. Believe me, Monseigneur de Sucker, we should abandon the old savage methods of plundering, burning and massacring. These are follies which ruin their authors. I am of Mgr. de Bayard's opinion.

BAYARD: Here is a fine-looking joint, and it comes very useful after so long a ride as that of to-day. Since Mgr. de Molard is willing to approve my little bit of wisdom, I will tell you that since my entering on the Italian wars, that is since 1494, or something like seventeen years, I have seen many notable changes.

DU FAY: I have not long borne your standard, my Lord, yet I, too, have seen changes.

BAYARD: When we came with King Charles, of victorious memory, we were like good peasants, marching from our villages, clumsy, badly drilled; and the Italians made fun of us as we to-day make fun of our Landsknechts, who appear rustic to us, if I may say so without offence to you, Monsieur Sucker.

SUCKER: In Germany we have greater scholars than yours! The Italians, who raise their heads so high, are not ashamed

to apply to us for architects. We built them their Cathedral of Milan, and our painters, such as Albrecht Dürer, give them lessons.

BAYARD: So you see how right I am in saying that there have been many novelties in the last few years. At the time of the battle of Fornovo, you would never have heard, at a bivouac, a captain of Landsknechts boasting of architects and painters! They thought then of nothing but wine, women, plunder, and pictures and statues were only fit to be hacked to pieces.

DU FAY: It's true! To-day, we regard those who do so as savages and brutes; they are only the newcomers from France. At the end of six months' stay, one begins to take pleasure in these beautiful things, and to become refined.

BAYARD: There is another point; in those days, not for gold or silver could you have persuaded a man-at-arms to fight. Now I know none braver than Signor Alviane, Signor Andrea Gritti, and many others. . . .

CAPTAIN MOLARD: And Pope Julius II.

Laughter.

BAYARD: True. . . . I should like to see the day when there'll be fighting only among men of war, and no more harrying of these poor townsmen and countryfolk; they can no longer endure the strifes of princes.

ZEMBERG: There's a terrible draught coming through these cloaks! My feet are frozen! Scoundrels, can't you arrange that construction a trifle better? I'll punch your heads, you rapscallions.

Enter the Grand Master of Chaumont, Yves d'Alègre, officers, men-at-arms.

GRAND MASTER: Good-evening and good-morning, captains! Have you a finger of wine to give me? Thanks, Monseigneur de Bayard! To your health, gentlemen!

BAYARD: To yours, my lord, and may heaven grant what your noble heart desires!

All drink.

GRAND MASTER: The Pope did not try to fly from your side?

BAYARD: If he does not escape from yours, be assured that he won't from mine. Laughter.

IN BOLOGNA.

A street near San Petronio.—Morning; crowd of people, artisans merchants, nobles, soldiers.

BUTCHER: If it only needs a push to turn the Pope out, give it him! Long live the Bentivoglio!

CROWD: Long live the Bentivoglio! Long live Bologna! Liberty!

Enter Francia and his pupils. Francesco Caccianimici, Amico Aspertino, painters.

Long live the school of Bologna! Down with the Romans!

A BAKER: Master Francia, what do you say to all this?

FRANCIA: I say that Michael Angelo is an insolent fellow, and his master is no better than he. Long live the Bentivoglio!

CROWD: Long live Bologna!

CACCIANIMICI: Yes, my children! Long live Bologna! Is this beautiful city less worthy of being free than Florence, than Lucca and so many other cities?

CROWD: No! no! Long live Bologna! and the Bentivoglio!

AMICO ASPERTINO: Everyone in his own home! A free city! No subjection!

CROWD: Liberty! Liberty! Long live the Bentivoglio!

BAKER: We need a prince who spends our money and his in our city, and not elsewhere! Who builds churches and palaces for us, and not for the Romans! Long live Bologna!

CROWD: Long live the Bentivoglio! Liberty! liberty! To the palace! Down with the Pope!

ASPERTINO: Let us go and break the statue of Michael Angelo! What say you!

CROWD: Down with the statue!

CACCIANIMICI: Yes! let us go!

All the crowd follows him, uttering loud shouts.

THE PALACE.

Julius II., in his armchair, stick in hand ; the Cardinal of Pavia, the Cardinal Regino, the Bishop of Gurck, Michael Angelo, the Count Giovanni Francesco Pico.

JULIUS II.: This insurrection is still raging? They're still shouting? Are you mad, Regino? Have I not already given orders?

REGINO: Holy Father, the Swiss charged twice and were repulsed.

JULIUS II.: Cavalry and two bombards! Run! If the noise lasts, I shall go myself.

Exit Cardinal Regino.

He is a little weak, poor man. Count Pico, you will return to M. de Chaumont, although it is not yet time to give him an answer.

COUNT: Yes, Holy Father.

JULIUS II.: You will tell him that I consent to everything, not being in a position to discuss anything, and that in proof of my good faith, I beg him to send me the treaty in the form and spirit that he will understand. You will be careful to complain against every article and to prolong the whole interview. Then you will bring me the treaty to sign. In this way we have till this evening before us, and even till to-morrow morning, if we wish.

COUNT (aside): Does your Holiness know where the Spaniards are . . . or the Venetians?

JULIUS II.: They will both arrive about half-past one. Wheedle your Grand Master, detain him ; try and see that he does not go. I shall have the pleasure of surprising him in my turn, enveloping him, pressing him, and they'll see what I shall do with this ultramontane scoundrel who dares to lay his base hand on the shoulder of the Vicar of Christ! . . . Go, my child!

Count Pico kneels ; the Pope blesses him brusquely.

Come, now, Michael Angelo, where are your designs for fortresses?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Here they are, Holy Father.

POPE: Go to the spot, trace me the foundations immediately, and begin work. I also need mines, and from to-day you will see to the installation of the cannon foundries of which you showed me the plan.

MICHAEL ANGELO: If I play the engineer and the founder, I cannot play the sculptor and the painter. You will complain very soon that the works of the Sistine and the statues of your tomb are not advancing.

JULIUS II. (striking his stick on the ground): Certainly, I shall complain, and I have only too good reason to complain. Idlers that you are! Instead of wearying me with your remarks you should already have finished your task! Go!

Exit Michael Angelo.

Cardinal of Pavia, did you not just tell me that the Emperor desired to be Pope in my place, and took the title of Pontifex Maximus?

CARDINAL OF PAVIA: Yes, Holy Father; Louis XII. put this folly into his ear.

JULIUS II.: It is an impertinence. I command the secretaries of the briefs henceforth to entitle me "Cæsar." I am universal Emperor by right as representing God on earth.

A discharge of artillery is heard.

Good! Here are the Bolognese getting my grapeshot in their legs.

Several prelates and bishops approach and make a profound obeisance.

What do you want?

A BISHOP: Your Holiness' person is in terrible danger. The French, the people, all are threatening you. Is it not a time for prudence and moderation? I am impelled to use such language to you, Holy Father, by our venerable brethen here present. . . . Consider how your health is seriously affected, and how besides, we are defenceless old men, and if we must submit to the outrages of the soldiery or those of the rebel populace——

JULIUS II.: What does this imbecile want? What means

all this verbiage? . . . Call my bearers; I want to be hoisted to the top of the cathedral so as to see what is passing in the country. But no . . . wait . . . Cardinal of Pavia, give me your arm. . . . You here, Captain, approach. . . . Your arm! Oh, I can walk! Come!

ROME.

At the house of Janus Corycius of Luxemburg.—A large room with a ceiling painted with a mythological subject; frescoes on the walls; mosaic pavements; great vases full of flowers, the windows open out upon a garden, and, in the background, one sees the houses of a quarter of the town embowered in trees.—Agostino Chigi and his brother Sigismondo Chigi, priest; il Bramante; Bernardo da Bibbiena; l'Imperia; Raphael; the chronologer Bartolommeo Turini da Pescia; Giacomo Sansecondo, the musician; other guests.—All the company is spread in groups over the vast room, some standing, laughing and talking, others sitting on arm-chairs, folding seats or cushions.

IL BRAMANTE (to Raphael): Leave Madam Imperia for a moment, and listen to what I have to say to you of Michael Angelo.

RAPHAEL: Let me amuse myself for a moment. I am dead with fatigue and dulled with work. If Michael Angelo intrigues against me, you play the devil against him—so we are quits.

IL BRAMANTE: I think that your lightness of heart is at least equal to your talent. Michael Angelo says everywhere that what you know you have learnt from him.

RAPHAEL: True, he taught me something: but I do not think he lends countenance to the folly you attribute to him. He is a man of fierce temper, but not a knave. After all, he is at Bologna with the Pope; let us leave him in peace. He offered incredible insults to Master Francia, my friend, who cannot pardon them.

IL BRAMANTE: Unhappily, the Buonarotti is all-powerful with the Holy Father, and as he does not miss a single occasion of damaging you, there will come a day when . . . .

RAPHAEL (impatiently): There will come a day when, by

virtue of setting us one against the other, the best friends of each of us will have turned us to deadly enemies. That would be disgraceful, and I shall resist it so far as I can.

IL BRAMANTE: I could have wished them at least to give you half the ceiling of the Sistine to do. But Michael Angelo gets everything!

RAPHAEL: Have you no more to say to me?

IL BRAMANTE: Go and amuse yourself, as you have no blood in your veins.

RAPHAEL: I cannot be angry with anyone, especially with a man I admire. Have I not more work than strength to accomplish it?

JANUS CORYCIUS: Master Raphael, have you seen the group of the Most Holy Virgin and Saint Anne executed for me by Master Andrea Sansovino, in the Church of St. Augustine?

RAPHAEL: I admired it to-day myself; it is one of the finest works of our time. I do not forget that you want from me a portrait in that same church.

JANUS CORYCIUS: I entreat you, Master Raphael, realise your fine promises; when will you begin?

RAPHAEL: Listen! I will do a sibyl with a laurel-wreath about her head. Does that satisfy you?

JANUS CORYCIUS: Yes, but will it be a young or an old sibyl?

BIBBIENA: Note, dear Raphael, that Signor Corycius has a passion for beauty.

RAPHAEL: My sibyl is the most lovable being that Nature has created, or the mind can conceive. . . . But here is the very reverend Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici.

Enter the Cardinal. He embraces Raphael.

CARDINAL: I love you as if you were the child of my loins, and so well that I am almost jealous of your friendship for the Signor da Bibbiena.

BIBBIENA: Monsignor Raphael loves so many things and so many people, and has a heart so richly endowed with every

affectionate impulse that there is no need to dispute his friendship.

SIGISMONDO CHIGI: For my part, I ask him at this moment the right to thank him for having placed in his picture of the Theology the figure of the great, the sainted, the venerable martyr, Fra Girolamo Savonarola. A day will come when all the world will do justice to this great man, and I bless Master Raphael for having been one of the first to prepare his triumph.

RAPHAEL: This merit does not belong to me. It belongs entirely to Signor Count Balthazar Castiglione and my other guide, Ludovico Ariosto; both gave me advice on the saints and wise doctors whom I should introduce into my composition.

IMPERIA: Most reverend Signor Cardinal, have you only eyes to-day for Signor Raphael?

CARDINAL: Ah, Madam, how sorry I am. I have such bad eyes, in fact! I had not yet caught sight of you.

IMPERIA: Do not put yourself out, Monsignor; only, do not prevent Giacomo from singing. You see, he is tuning his lute.

CARDINAL: Will you not allow me, cruel that you are, to sit at least a minute next to you?

IMPERIA: Ah, Monsignor, you think only of statues, of pictures, and of books.

CARDINAL: And never of the living Aphrodite?

They talk in a low voice. Sansecondo begins to sing. Enter Michael Angelo.

JANUS CORYCIUS: Welcome, Signor Buonarotti.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Do not put yourself out. My mission once fulfilled, I shall retire. I salute the most reverend Cardinal. Good evening, Master Raphael. The Holy Father sends me from Bologna expressly notifying Mgr. da Bibbiena to be in readiness to rejoin him instantly. . . . He said instantly, without losing a second.

CARDINAL: What has happened, then?

MICHAEL ANGELO: The French and the Bentivoglio surprised us at Bologna. . . .

ALL: Great God! The Pope is a prisoner.

MICHAEL ANGELO: He trifled with the French, he crushed the Bolognese. The Venetians and the Spaniards had time to hurry to our aid; the French fled to Milan. My Lord Bibbiena, are you coming! I must return, without wasting an hour, to direct the siege of La Mirandola.

THE CHRONOLOGER BARTOLOMMEO TURINI: The Pope is not coming back here?

MICHAEL ANGELO: After La Mirandola, we shall take Ferrara; then, we shall see. Let us go.

JANUS CORYCIUS: What a man the Pope is—at his age!

AGOSTINI CHIGI: He! He has no age; he is purely an inextinguishable fire of energy. From this fire come whirls of flame, of sparks and of smoke.

CARDINAL: And volcanic explosions! I pity the poor city of La Mirandola and the unhappy Countess Francesca Trivulzio. She will be put outside with her children, like a beggar. Go, my Lord Bibbiena, the Pope does not care to wait.

BIBBIENA: I follow you, Master Michael Angelo. Good evening, Raphael, my boy; enjoy yourself!

RAPHAEL: I shall do my best. Good-evening, Master Buonarotti; give me your hand.

MICHAEL ANGELO: When I return! Good evening, Monsignor and gentlemen.

Exeunt he and Bibbiena.

IMPERIA: What a disagreeable man!

JANUS CORYCIUS: Let us begin merrymaking! Supper is ready.

LA MIRANDOLA.

A room in the castle. The Countess Francesca Trivulzio, her children, her waiting-women, officers of the garrison ; an envoy from the Duke of Urbino, commander of the troops of the Church.

COUNTESS: I have given my answer, Sir. I shall not restore my city to the Holy Father. It is the patrimony of my children. I stand up for their rights and for justice.

ENVOY: Madam, Mgr. the Duke of Urbino has good artillery and more troops than you. If you compel him to make an assault, he will not answer for the consequences.

COUNTESS: I am the daughter of Gian Giacomo Trivulzio ; my blood is not chilled by threats. You have my last word. Return to your master.

ENVOY: Madam, deign to consider. . . .

COUNTESS: Show this captain out.

MILAN.

The Ducal palace.—Gaston de Foix, Duke of Nemours, captain-general of the French troops in Italy ; the Grand Master of Chaumont, Governor of the Milanese ; the Seigneur de Clermont-Montoison, commander of the French auxiliaries given to the Duke of Ferrara ; the Prince of Anhalt, general of the Emperor's troops ; Louis de Brézé, grand seneschal of Normandy, commander of the gentlemen of the King's household ; the Captains Ives d'Alègre, Bonnet, Maugiron ; the bastard of Cleves and other officers. Council of war.

GASTON DE FOIX: My Lords and Captains, it is the desire of the King not to drag matters out. He intends to put an end to the enterprises of Pope Julius II. This so-called Pontiff, harsher to Christian princes than if he were the Turk, wants to despoil everyone of his property and enrich himself

at the expense of all. Nefariously allied to the Spaniards, who are treachery itself, and to the Venetians, who might be named the fathers of lies, this self-styled Holy Father does not conceal his desire of sending us back across the Alps, by robbing us of the Milanese. He wishes to take all, to keep all. In this laudable design, arousing the Turk against the Emperor and the English against us, he causes the Atlantic coast and the plains of Hungary to be ravaged at once. Hitherto we have done our best to temporise, and have opposed all these tornadoes by patience and gentleness. Proceeding by the way of reason, we assembled a council, few in numbers, it is true, but composed of doctors most worthy of trust. Julius II. did not scruple to raise the populace of Pisa against this holy assembly, which we had to transfer hither so as to make it secure. Henceforth, it is palpable that only a war to the knife can satisfy the spite of the Pope. Accordingly, I repeat, we shall no longer spare anything, and the King desires that results should come speedily. That is why I have called you together. So be pleased to inform me, my Lords and Captains, whether your troops are prepared to take the field, and what you think of the situation we are in.

D'ALEGRE: Since so many Seigneurs more notable than I do not breathe a word, I embolden myself to show you again that if you intend to fight, it must be done well, stoutly, vigorously, without losing a minute, for the enemy you have in mind is one who has kept and will keep your hands full. When Mgr. the Grand Master failed to take him at Bologna, the next day he was in the field like a needy adventurer of twenty. Captain Bayard set off on his track to surprise him; he did not succeed, and Julius II., with his own hands, helped to raise the drawbridge of the castle of San Felice, which preserved him from our doughty knight. Now, this terrible

adversary must be in person before La Mirandola. His nephew, the Duke of Urbino, has taken La Concordia; the Spaniards with the Viceroy Don Raimondo of Cardona and an admirable infantry are advancing against us; the Venetians threaten Brescia and, as they have powerful accomplices there, I believe they will take it. Finally, the Swiss are gathering up there, on the mountains above our heads, and the Pope, with money as a lever, will roll them down on us. So let us make haste, and if we wish to save Ferrara, let us take Bologna.

DE BREZE: You argue to the point, Captain d'Alègre; but Bologna is not easy to take. The Cardinal Regino has been replaced by the Cardinal of Pavia; he is a soldier who will not let himself be captured. Besides, the Duke of Urbino is in a position to give us trouble, for the Spaniards have time to come to his aid. In that case it would be necessary to raise the siege.

D'ALEGRE: Bologna has revolt flaming in its entrails, and if we merely look like making an assault, the citizens will at once open us the gates; the Cardinal will have to fly and gain the open country.

GASTON DE FOIX: Gentlemen, I am of the same opinion as Captain d'Alègre, and I ask you to be ready four days from now.

BEFORE LA MIRANDOLA.

The breach.—The ditches are frozen. The men-at-arms and the pontifical troops under arms; two batteries are still aiming to enlarge the entry. Julius II., the Duke of Urbino, the Cardinals Raphael Riario, del Carretto, Galeotto della Rovere, Francesco Romolino and Ludovico Borgia; Captain Gian Paolo Baglione; secretaries, chamberlains, Swiss guards; the Pope and all the members of his suite, clad in furs and hooded cloaks; severe cold.

JULIUS II.: Well! is it over?

DUKE OF URBINO: The town has capitulated. One of the walled-up doors is to be broken in, so as to give a passage to your Holiness.

JULIUS II.: No! I shall enter by the breach. Where is the Countess Francesca?

DUKE: She awaits your Holiness in the castle.

JULIUS II.: She may retire where she will. Let us advance. This evening we shall start for Ferrara.

Enter a messenger.

MESSENGER: Holy Father, Bologna is in the hands of the French.

JULIUS II.: The Cardinal has surrendered the place?

MESSENGER: The populace has risen and opened the gates.

JULIUS II.: So you left an insufficient garrison, Francesco Maria?

DUKE OF URBINO: Most Holy Father, I obeyed your orders.

JULIUS II.: That means that, in your opinion, the Cardinal of Pavia, that Alidosio in whom I have every confidence, is a fool, a coward, or a traitor? Answer?

DUKE OF URBINO: It seems to me that if someone must be wrong, it's he rather than I.

THE POPE: I will clear up this matter. . . . I feel very strongly upon it . . . . you may believe that, and no consideration will stay my righteous anger. Where is Michael Angelo?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Here, Holy Father.

THE POPE: Give orders promptly for the defences of the Piazza to be repaired and put in a proper state. Do the work which we discussed, and return to Rome with all speed to proceed with my tomb. When I see what I see and suffer what I suffer, I feel the desire to be in it already. My cup of sorrow is full!

ROME.

A studio of small dimensions.—Carved furniture, fine purple stuffs, blue, gold, silver; an antique statue of Pallas; a bust of Psyche; vases filled with flowers, whose scent refreshes and perfumes the room.—Raphael before his easel working at the portrait of Monna Beatrice da Ferrara.

RAPHAEL: It is not often that I find myself alone . . . . alone . . . . for a long time . . . . able to think and feel as I please . . . . not subjected to the weight of any immediate idea that orders me about and treats me like a slave. . . . No! to-day, I am my own master, my sole companion. . . . I enjoy at my own sweet will, and with nothing to dispute it, every whiff of delight that comes to me from that pleasure of solitude, so penetrating, so lively that the irritated senses cannot bear it long. Man's imagination is so weak! He constantly needs external aid to support himself in the air, and when this help is too rare, and is not ceaselessly renewed, then the poor bird falls, wearied out, and no longer moves. What a misfortune! . . . . for it feels itself far more living in those short moments where it suffices to itself! It is at such moments that I have conceived the most beautiful things I can create. Yes, it is then that I have come closer to the Creator who made me

what I am, to the heavenly objects that I can express, to the still more divine tenderness that I can feel. . . . Nature is deep; but the soul that penetrates her is a flame, joyous and bright! In vain do all the calamities of earth and hell weigh on man, weigh on us above all, us Italians, harassed by the barbarians, the princes, the republics, the factions and so many varied kinds of criminals. Joy, life, fertility exalt us; we swim, we artists, in an Olympian empyrean. And the scholars, the poets, the men of letters, the antiquaries, the painters, the sculptors, the architects, the engravers, the intaglio workers, the illuminators, all that from some form or style has become capable of expressing a thought, a shade of thought, an infinitesimal atom of an idea, all is at work, toils, will not be disturbed, heaps effects upon effects, and weathers all these storms with the light of genius on its brow, a smile on its lips, and its work in its hand! Who gives us such a value, such a virtue, this power which was never seen before? Athens only knew the Greek inventions, an admirable architecture, an incomparable sculpture, but painting that was a slave to its glorious sister, and sciences limited where poetry was not. That was her destiny! As to us, what higher riches are showered on us, and how far wider an arena is open to our efforts! Do not we possess what antiquity possessed, and also what our fathers learnt by themselves? We are able to portray, as did Polycletus and Zeuxis, the gods of pagan times, but also the saints of heavenly Jerusalem—the philosophers, but also the schoolmen. . . . Well, we shall be fit for anything, we shall attain anything, and the universe, transmuted by our hands, will be re-fashioned; we shall have succeeded in expelling, if not evil, at any rate its most hideous forms. Is not my sentiment true? Could the passion that transports me lead me astray? What would then be the use of feeling it? Why should heaven, from which it undoubtedly issues, send it me, if it is to remain barren? . . .

How this portrait assumes reality . . . . it is like my Beatrice! . . . how the blood courses through this adored face! . . .

He turns, and sees Beatrice on the threshold.

Ah, here you are yourself! Here you are, my dearest! My light, my star!

BEATRICE: Work, Raphael, my Raphael! That is how I love you best!

RAVENNA.

A room in the palace.—Julius II., the Cardinal Riario; Lionardo da Bibbiena, secretaries. The Pope is dictating dispatches.

Enter Matthias Scheiner, Cardinal of Sion.

JULIUS II.: Body of Christ! I gave orders not to be interrupted. You, seal this letter, and see that the post sets off at once for England. What is doing, Matthias?

CARDINAL MATTHIAS SCHEINER: A misfortune!

JULIUS II.: What misfortune?

CARDINAL SCHEINER: The Cardinal of Pavia was coming here to justify himself before your Holiness for having lost Bologna.

JULIUS II.: If I have lost Bologna, I shall recover it. He may have been weak; I do not believe him to be a traitor. Let him come!

CARDINAL SCHEINER: My lord, the Duke of Urbino, fearing that the Cardinal will put the blame on him——

JULIUS II.: No such falsehoods! Am I a preposterous dotard who can be hoodwinked by all and sundry? . . . Is Francesco Maria making game of me? Bid the Cardinal make haste. I will listen to him, and if the Duke of Urbino

has done wrong, he shall be punished. . . . Well, what does this mean? . . . Why this silence? . . . Will you speak? . . . Go and fetch me Alidosio.

CARDINAL OF SION: The Duke of Urbino has just met him in the street, in front of the palace; he went to him. . . .

JULIUS II.: Good! He insulted him. He is a featherbrain. I shall see to that. . . .

CARDINAL OF SION: No, Most Holy Father . . . he . . .

JULIUS II.: By all the saints! Would he dare to strike him? Raise his hand against a prince of the Holy Roman Church? . . . You will not say? . . . He did not strike him, surely? . . .

CARDINAL OF SION: Most Holy Father! . . .

JULIUS II.: Blood of the Madonna! Speak! . . .

CARDINAL OF SION: He . . . he stabbed him!

JULIUS II.: Stabbed him. . . . Impossible . . . it . . .

CARDINAL OF SION: He stabbed him, and the Cardinal of Pavia is there below, killed on the spot, and the crowd around him. . . . I saw them on the point of carrying away the corpse.

Julius II. collapses and falls back into his chair. He covers his eyes . . . . then raises his head, looks around him, and says in a dull voice:—

Go, all of you! . . . Yes, all. . . . No! . . . Remain here . . . you . . . Matthias!

All depart except the Cardinal of Sion.

JULIUS II.: I have had much good fortune in my life. . . . I have suffered much misery . . . many mishaps . . . many great disasters . . . and yet, hitherto, I had never felt the disgust of shame, of humiliation, of meanness. . . . I had never felt anything break within me! And it is my own nephew, my nearest in flesh, in blood, in personality, in will, in soul;

it is this part of myself that has inflicted upon me a degradation. . . . And yet I . . . yes, my friend . . . you have dealt me a terrible blow. . . . I feel weak, Matthias. . . . I have no more strength. . . . I do not know what is coming over me. . .

CARDINAL OF SION: God uses our nearest and dearest to visit us with the sorest afflictions.

JULIUS II.: This is hardly to be borne. It might at any rate have happened at some other moment, for, to-day, you know how our edifice is cracking at every point. I aim only at the highest glory of the Papacy, as you are well aware, Matthias. I wield a great power, it is true. But I aim at much more than I attain. I am consumed by desires beyond the bounds of possibility. . . . That is what I am. . . . I realise now: all is crumbling and perishing. . . . I stumble at every step. Obstacles of every kind multiply beneath my feet. Wickedness, meanness, arrogance, all the vices of hell intermingle and are welded together; they form an inextricable network, that enmeshes me, stifles me, and, as a final blow, behold now how mad and bloody frenzy issues from the neighbourhood of my loins, issues from my very blood to block my path! You realise that henceforth I am dishonoured. You realise it? . . . You see it? You confess it? . . . You, a brutal and callous Swiss! . . . My enemies rely on that self-styled Council, that ridiculous assembly of wretched puppets! That Santa Croce! . . . They already accuse me of being a drunkard . . . because I am old, because my face is reddened by work and my hands tremble at times, although the weight of my will is still too heavy for their thick skulls. . . . And that Louis of France, a clodhopper, a vulgar peasant, will say that I cut Cardinals' throats after the fashion of the simoniacal poisoner who was swept before me from the See of the Apostles! . . . What am I to do? My ruin is already accomplished. . . . I

might as well lie on the ground and abandon all to the villainy of my foes!

CARDINAL OF SION: It is a great misfortune. . . . But when one has some energy one can recover from any blow.

JULIUS II.: Give me a glass of wine . . . there, in that pantry. . . . (He drinks.) Never matter! . . . The blow is hard. . . . Alidosio surrendered Bologna, it is true . . . still, he was a good servant. . . . And my nephew . . . my nephew! . . . The wretch is no more anything to me! My nephew! A scorpion that rears his head against me! What earthly consideration would prevent me from crushing him? . . . No! no! no! I shall make a terrible example! If the crime terrifies, the punishment will terrify still more! Nothing like it will have been seen since the condemnation of Brutus' sons, and we shall see what they say of it!

CARDINAL OF SION: I think you would not be wrong. Still, consider. . . .

JULIUS II.: All shall perish, save myself and the interests of the Church. . . . Listen! I am going back to Rome at once; there, an inexorable tribunal will be formed. The Duchy of Urbino will be re-united to the Church domains. The assassin . . . shall be arrested . . . enchained . . . dragged into the prison of the Holy Office! He shall not come out alive! Write to the Cardinals that I order them to come to the Consistory.

CARDINAL OF SION: I will do so.

JULIUS II.: Make a note of this: A Council, a real Council, is summoned without delay to the Vatican, in order to aggravate and re-aggravate the excommunications launched against Louis of France, Alphonso of Este and their supporters. Have you written that?

CARDINAL OF SION: Yes.

JULIUS II.: Write further: The siege of Ferrara must be pressed! Write to Marc Antonio Colonna, to the Venetians, to the Swiss, that my will is unshakable. I have money: tell them so! . . . We must also make an end of the government of Florence and its imbecile head, Soderini! Make a note of that. . . . Good. . . . The Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici will lead the Church army on this occasion. . . . We shall have on our side the partisans of his house. . . . But . . . . mark me well . . . . I do not intend that, once the Signiory is overthrown, Lorenzo's heirs should regain power. . . . They shall be put off with fair words. . . . Florence and Tuscany must belong to the Church. . . . You will tell Bibbiena to come to an understanding with me on that subject.

CARDINAL OF SION: I have written, Most Holy Father.

JULIUS II.: I feel better. Ho, some one!

Enter a chamberlain.

Have my litter prepared and everything made ready. We leave for Rome this evening. Order my secretaries in. There's work to be done!

BRESCIA.

The town has been taken by the French and sacked. Troops of soldiers, men-at-arms, Landsknechts, adventurers, sword in hand, furious with rage, crowd the streets ; some of the houses are burning ; doors are broken in ; women are dragged by their hair on the pavement ; massacre everywhere. The trumpets and the drums sound and beat to the muster ; no soldier heeds them ; almost all are drunk. The uproar, the shouting and shrieking, the arquebus discharges are ceaseless.—Gaston de Foix, Captain Hirigoye, Captain Molard, sword in hand ; Captains Bonnet, Maugiron, de Cleves ; all helmeted and much heated.

CAPTAIN MOLARD: Mgr. de Bayard has just been severely wounded!

GASTON DE FOIX: That's unfortunate! . . . Is he dead?

CAPTAIN HIRIGOYE: Nearly! I saw him stretched out on four pikes, and he was carried into a house.

A MAN-AT-ARMS (coming up at a gallop): My Lord, Captain d'Alègre sends word to you that he has cut off some Venetians dragoons in the town. They were trying to escape by the Santo-Nazaro gate. We beat them back on the Piazza ; being surrounded, they surrendered. We hold them prisoners.

ALL THE CAPTAINS: Bravo! A fine capture!

GASTON DE FOIX: Have you any prisoners of note?

MAN-AT-ARMS: We hold the provveditore Andrea Gritti, Contarini, the podestà Giustiniani, some captains of the Republic, and Count Avogadro.

CAPTAIN MOLARD: Excellent! The damned author of the revolt of Brescia, the man to whom we owe this bloody day!

GASTON DE FOIX: Tell Seigneur d'Alègre that Count Avogadro is to be instantly beheaded in the open square, and his body cut into as many pieces as there are quarters in the town.

CAPTAIN MAUGIRON: Admirable justice! Every quarter shall have its portion! Ah, the double traitor! That's his worthy reward!

CAPTAIN HIRIGOYE: My Lord, I can no longer hold in my Gascons! If means are not found for putting an end to

the pillage, it will be all over with my companies; I defy anyone to rally them!

Captain Jacob d'Empser comes up at a run.

CAPTAIN JACOB: My Lord, my Lord, I can no longer hold in my Landsknechts! They are fighting with the Gascons!

CAPTAIN HIRIGOYE: Head of God! Sir Jacob, you shall answer to me for it—I care as little for your skin. . . .

GASTON DE FOIX: Are you mad, Captain Hirigoye? Challenging one of your comrades? Are you making game of us?

CAPTAIN JACOB: The truth is, we must separate these rascals, otherwise they will destroy each other.

GASTON DE FOIX: Captain Maugiron, take fifty cuirassiers of my company, and hammer at the Gascons and Landsknechts until they let go. Kill all who keep on fighting!

CAPTAIN JACOB: I'll go also, to try and smooth matters over.

CAPTAIN HIRIGOYE: Head of St. Antonine! Belly of St. Quenet! Ah, a thousand million scoundrels! My Gascons are devouring everything! Let us come and see what is doing, my dear Captain Jacob!

They go out hastily; the fifty men at arms gallop off.

A COMPANY SERGEANT: Reinforcements, my Lord! Captain Jacquin sends me to inform you that from the house-tops they are killing the free-lances with stones and scalding them with boiling pitch.

GASTON DE FOIX: My Lord of Cleves, go to the spot with your infantrymen.

BASTARD OF CLEVES: I don't know where they are! There are not ten of them together. I'll run there myself.

GASTON DE FOIX: Dragoons! follow me!

He goes with the rest of his artillery company; a shower of tiles, furniture, beams fall on them from the housetops.

A CONVENT.

The church full of women and children ; cries of terror

LANDSKNECHTS : Loot! Loot! The women are ours!

Massacre and violation.

THE INTERIOR OF A HOUSE.

Captain Bayard wounded, lying on the floor. Soldiers of Captain Molard's company who have brought him ; a squire of the captain ; his valet, the Bastard of Cordon ; the lady of the house, her two daughters in tears, all three on their knees.

BAYARD : Have no fear! Do not weep! Madame and you, mesdemoiselles, I vouch for your safely. You shall not suffer the least scratch. Comrades, go and keep watch at the door! Tell those who wish to enter that I am here. The house is mine. Quick!

LADY : Ah, my Lord, save our lives! Save our honour! We will pay a great ransom!

BAYARD : I did not become a dragoon to make money. Rest assured. I am losing blood! Have me put on a bed! Comrades, I will give you the equivalent of your share of booty!

SOLDIERS and SQUIRES : Thanks, many thanks, Captain, we will not desert you! No one shall enter here!

WOMEN : Glory be to God, we are saved!

BAYARD : Have no fear. . . . Ah, Holy Blessed Virgin, what agony!

He faints.

FLORENCE.

The Palazzo Ruccellai.—A room.—The Gonfalonier Piero Soderini, Niccolò Valori, Niccolò Machiavelli, Agostino Capponi, Palla Ruccellai.

MACHIAVELLI: I do not know if what I tell you preserves its clearness as it passes from my lips, but nothing seems more manifest. The State is lost; we are on the brink of a revolution.

PALLA RUCCELLAI: I think so, too, and cannot understand it at all. One can only impute it to the perversity of public opinion. Florence possesses all the liberties.

MACHIAVELLI: She does not feel that this is a great boon to her.

AGOSTINO CAPPONI: We have the republic of our fathers.

MACHIAVELLI: The children have acquired different habits.

PIERO SODERINI: Do me the justice to admit that in my method of government I try to satisfy all interests. Yes, indeed I do.

MACHIAVELLI: But you awaken no enthusiasm. So long as Fra Girolamo led us, our population interested itself in something, it was excited, animated, inflamed, and in such a state men are capable of sacrifice. To-day, lethargy is universal. I wish I were mistaken, but I admit to you, my friends, I fear that the time of the Medici has come back.

CAPPONI: Then if we are to have new Tarquins, let us take measures to find new Brutuses.

MACHIAVELLI: We must do nothing rash.

SODERINI: The march of events drives us on. The Congress of Mantua, which the Pope has raised against us . . . my God! what harm that man does us!

NICCOLO VALORI: I thought him ruined after the infamous deed of his nephew; but he pardoned the murderer, and no one thinks any more of the matter. I thought him ruined

after the battle of Ravenna—but that imbecile of a Frenchman, Gaston de Foix, wins it and then goes and gets killed, so that his victory is worse for his side than a defeat! I thought him ruined before the Council of Milan—but he discredits that council, musters another, and retakes Bologna, no one knows how! He has his foot on the Duke of Ferrara's neck and is going to dethrone him, while the French, triumphant yesterday, abandon us and fly home, because this accursed Pope, from the depths of his calamities, rises like Satan from the depths of the abyss, and hurls upon them thunderbolts of awful potency! Behold the Swiss rolling in furious torrents on the Milanese. Finally, so far as we are concerned, it is not enough that we have just lost the protection of Louis XII., but the routed soldiers of that miserable king must needs let their prisoner of Ravenna, Giovanni de' Medici, escape! And now Julius II. sends him to us at the head of the Papal army. The situation is becoming intolerable!

MACHIAVELLI: Julius II.'s plans are more to be dreaded than those of the late Duke of Valentinois.

RUCCELLAI: How so, pray?

MACHIAVELLI: The Borgia worked only for himself; his work would, in any case, have ended with his life, for he had no children. But the Pope works for the Church, and, at the very least, he will bequeath traditions most perilous to the independence of the Italian States.

VALORI: It is deplorable to think that the majority of our fellow-citizens imagine that with the government of the Medici, trade will be better. Moreover, we are beginning to have the artists ranged against us. Their tribe wants festivals, luxury and extravagance.

CAPPONI: A well-aimed dagger-thrust has often done a great deal of good.

MACHIAVELLI: Or a great deal of harm. Good evening, gentlemen. I go home feeling very uneasy.

BARBERINO.

The city in the background. Across country, at the foot of the Apennines, the Spanish army and the Papal troops are on the march towards Florence by the Plain which leads to Prato.—At the head of a company of men-at-arms march Don Raimondo de Cardona, Viceroy of Naples, General of the League; Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, Legate of the Holy See in the Romagna and Tuscany; the Duke of Urbino, Captains Vitelli and Orsini, other officers.

DUKE OF URBINO: Certainly, most reverend sir, the Holy Father asks for nothing better than to see your family re-instated at Florence and in possession of its rights. But you want to go too fast, you are precipitating matters, and I have express orders to act with prudence and circumspection.

CARDINAL GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI: If we proceed as you are doing, all will be lost. The popular party will undoubtedly be overthrown. The intriguers, the heirs of Savonarola, will disappear, but who will be set up in their place? That is a thing which you cannot say, but which I should like to know.

DUKE OF URBINO: I could not destroy his Holiness, nor you either, nor anyone. Return to Florence with your kinsfolk, but in a private capacity.

AN OFFICER (to Don Raimondo): Your Excellency, the Florentines have just reinforced the garrison of Prato with two thousand foot and a hundred lancers, under the command of Luca Savelli.

DON RAIMONDO: I am sorry to hear it. We lack artillery and even provisions.

DUKE OF URBINO: We must negotiate. I have orders to make terms with the Florentines. If they are willing to send back Soderini and admit the Medici on the footing of ordinary citizens, I am ordered to declare myself satisfied.

CARDINAL GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI: As there is no way of obtaining better terms, let us send an envoy, and in the meanwhile, let us take a little rest under these trees.

DON RAIMONDO: I obey you, my Lord; let us dismount and do as you wish.

They stop their horses and dismount; servants stretch a carpet under a tree; the captains sit down.

VENICE.

The Palazzo Gradenigo. Luigi Malipiero, Leonardo Mocenigo, Luigi Gradenigo. A large room with windows looking out on to the lagoon.

GRADENIGO: Welcome, noble Lords. I was almost expecting the honour of receiving you to-day, since the weather is glorious.

MOCENIGO: We have come to find you, as we agreed yesterday, so that we can go and make a tour of the studios of our painters.

MALIPIERO: I will also propose a visit to the printing-press of our friend Manuzio. He has founded a new Greek type, and it is said to be exceedingly beautiful.

GRADENICO: I shall have much pleasure in seeing it. Signor Aldo is a hero of learning. The knowledge accumulated in his erudite head would suffice for the glory of a whole regiment of Hellenists and Latinisers. By the way, I have just received a letter from Signor Navagiero.

MALIPIERO: Is he still at Pordenone with the valiant and witty Signor Alviane?

GRADENIGO: No doubt. He compliments me highly on the society of men of breeding and learning assembled by our Captain-General in this elegant sanctuary of the Muses.

MOCENIGO: Is his poem making progress?

GRADENIGO: The fine work is nearing completion, and Signor Navagiero has read some of it to his friends, with every mark of applause. But, illustrious Signors, I think my gondola is at the landing-stage, and we must be going. Let us first betake ourselves to Master Titian, then we will visit Robusti and the others.

MOCENIGO: At your orders, noble Signor. For my part, I am only too happy to devote so fine a day to the contemplation of masterpieces in the company of so exquisite a connoisseur as your illustrious Excellency.

FERRARA.

A room in the Duchess' apartments. Rich Flanders tapestry representing mythological subjects, furniture of carved ebony, pictures, statues.— Madam Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Ferrara; Luigi Bembo.

BEMBO: You are anxious?

LUCREZIA (smiling): Not exactly . . . . but preoccupied. Why, I resemble pretty closely men's general notion of Italy. When you arrived, I was reading this manuscript open on my knees. It is the first cantos of Ludovico Ariosto's poem. That truly sublime poet sent it me this morning. I was giving rein to an enthusiastic admiration. But at the same time I was thinking that the Duke's affairs were not in so good a state as I should like to see them. Recently, the Pope wanted to assassinate him, and His Holiness only anwers our advances by threats. My husband, I know, is not the man to let himself be browbeaten. Nevertheless, at times I feel anxious, for, as you know well, Luigi, my children's future and the fortunes of our house are at stake; this is well worth reflection; and when I see to what a pass the Florentines are brought, I tell myself that the liberty of princes and republics is precarious indeed in face of the most ambitious of Pontiffs. Our turn to fall will come if heaven does not set matters in order. So you see, you who have been my friend all my life, my head is intoxicated with poetry, my reason distracted by political cares, my heart anxious for my husband and my children, and my feelings. . . .

BEMBO: Your feelings? . . .

LUCREZIA (smiling): My feelings, perhaps, a little distraught and going in your direction. . . . In short, is not that just like Italy? Poetry, fear, interests . . . . and love?

BEMBO: It is well said—and how well you remain mistress of fear, interests and love! As to poetry, I have not told you enough how admirable is your song of yesterday evening! I passed the night in reading and re-reading it, in covering it with kisses as a twenty-year-old student would have done. . . . But why did you write in Spanish?

LUCREZIA: Spanish is my native tongue, and the sentiment I wished to express is as strong as Spanish passion. What have you done with the lock of hair that accompanied the song?

BEMBO: It is in a vellum envelope tied with ribbon knots. I cannot believe that ever was shepherd of Theocritus or lover of Amaryllis happier than I!

LUCREZIA: Do you know that the Florentines have done many foolish things? The gonfalonier, Soderini, was unable either to make terms or to offer a defence. He has been driven out. The Medici have returned, and are treated as ordinary citizens.

BEMBO: An unworkable compromise! The result will be either a fresh banishment or a return to supreme power.

LUCREZIA: The Pope hopes to take Tuscany for himself.

BEMBO: Assuredly. If only the French had been able to hold their own at Milan! But winning all in a day and losing all in an hour has always been their way!

LUCREZIA: They are our allies and our support. At this moment, their misfortune is ours, but, in short (I will tell you in confidence) I could wish that Louis XII. would never come back. For in that case our fellow-countrymen, the Venetians, would be forced to guard against the Holy Father's encroachments. They would break with him and unite with Don Alfonso to guarantee the common liberty. That is what I should like to arrange, and the Medici would not be unwilling to enter this combination.

BEMBO: It seems to me, indeed, full of wisdom and worthy of the head of Pallas whence it issues. Let me think it over,

CARDINAL BEMBO

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and when I have appreciated its strong points, I can, if you agree, write to Venice.

LUCREZIA: Why lose time? Sit down at this table. I will explain you my ideas in detail, I will tell you what I know of the secret interests and the inclinations of princes . . . . and what I guess. . . . We will discuss the matter and in your fine Ciceronian style you will at once draw up a memorandum which we will send to the Signiory of Venice and to Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici. Are you willing?

BEMBO (going to the table): To work for the arbitress of my life—what could I desire better?

LUCREZIA: Do you know anything more charming than these verses from the Rolaid? Read yourself.

BEMBO (reading): "The first inscription that meets our eyes, honours with much praise Lucrezia Borgia, her who owes her beauty and exceeding virtue to the ancient country of her forbears—Rome." It is the mere truth, but it is well said. Why does my Lord the Cardinal Ippolito affect to treat Ariosto as a dandy?

LUCREZIA: Because my brother-in-law is an imbecile. Let us set to work, and listen to me carefully.

BEMBO: One word more. . . . You do not seem to notice that your idea runs counter to the precepts reiterated for the past twenty years. Savonarola desired the unity of Italy; your brother, the Duke of Valentinois, preached no other theme, and Pope Julius II. is perhaps, in his way, still more insistent on this score. You, on the contrary, confess that you only aim at continuing the partition.

LUCREZIA: It is not to the interests of Venice, or Florence, or Naples, or ourselves, that Italy should ever be united under one hand, for that hand could not possibly be ours. So long as it was not realised how far chance ruled human affairs, you, with your schemes of territorial aggrandisement, the Sforza, my brother, and Lorenzo the Magnificent, repeated in turn the same language and wished, for their own profit, to concentrate the Peninsula into one great State. Savonarola himself

dreamed of this for the benefit of his own ideas. Now, we know how we stand; we have all failed. To become beggars, prostrate before the Holy Father's feet, is not desirable. Henceforth, we shall not talk, believe me, of the greatness of the whole, but only of the independence of the parts. As a phrase, it sounds quite as well. Write, dear Luigi, I pray you.

BEMBO: Your system is new to me, I admit; it does not please me too well. . . . All my life I have professed opposite views.

LUCREZIA (smiling): Yes, and with great eloquence. What conclusion do you draw?

BEMBO: But consider! If Italy's forces are to remain scattered, there cannot even be a question of expelling the barbarians.

LUCREZIA: Did you seriously hope ever to succeed in that?

BEMBO: Clearly, I thought . . .

LUCREZIA: For the last ten years I have never thought anything of the kind . . . if perhaps I did so in days gone by. Besides, you are speaking to a Spaniard, do not forget that; people of my house and rank cannot share all your fancies. What is coming over you? Why, you seem quite moved by my confidences! I thought you had some liking for the society of barbarians?

BEMBO: Do not mock me too far. . . . I admit, you have given me quite a shock. . . . If we are never to become free, we Italians; if we must always undergo the caprices and the outrages of foreigners, unhappy race that we are, what are we to utter to heaven in our prayers save cruel reproaches and complaints too well justified?

LUCREZIA: How ungrateful you are! These invaders of your country, do you not gain the mastery of them? Are you not for the whole earth the centre of knowlege, of ideas, of philosophies, of great thoughts, and the workshop where the Muses have taken up their abode in order to produce their

magical creations? Is it not from you that the spark of genius which traverses the world and gives it new life arises? What glory is equal to yours? What power is superior?

BEMBO: Agreed; but he who is a giant in one aspect wishes to be so in all. Do not smile, I bow before your wisdom, and I take up my pen to obey you. I will work with you and for you, and as you desire; I shall constrain myself to make your plans succeed, because I am devoted to you. Yet, nevertheless, I also confess that I do not wish to lose the hope of my youth, my life's ideal. I long passionately for an Italy that is compact, strong, dominant in every sphere, and were it even under the rule and for the benefit of the Holy See, I should acquiesce and bless heaven for it. After all, what is needed for attaining success? Only a few years more of life granted to this Julius II., who is very embarrassing, I admit, but in many respects worthy of admiration. . . . You yourself agree to that on occasion. . . . And if luck will have it that France and Germany remain governed by incapable rulers, behold our dream realised. Leave me my hopes.

LUCREZIA: You are a grown-up child. I do not quarrel with your illusions, certain as I am that they will never prevent you from serving me well. You love them, but you love me more! . . . Yet reflect that they are follies, and that their realisation would not bring happiness to you or to anyone else. There is nothing great in this world save the love of art, the love of the things in the intellect, the love of those whom one loves, and moreover, when life in its course has raised you to one of those table-lands where the flowers become scarcer and the horizons more stern, perhaps you will still find pleasure in wise reflection on certain eternal matters about which we trouble less in our first youth. . . . But enough! Let us set to our work, and listen to me with all attention.

ROME.

The Vatican.—The Holy Father's bedroom.—Julius II. in bed. Bernardo da Bibbiena; Cardinal of Sion; the datary Lorenzo Pucci.

JULIUS II.: All is over. . . . I am dying . . . . and I have accomplished nothing of what I have undertaken.

BIBBIENA: All is not over, Most Holy Father. Your Holiness has abundant strength left.

JULIUS II.: No longer enough. I have not finished the Vatican, nor the re-building of Rome, nor my tomb, nor anything. . . . My artists will disperse when I am no more. . . . . The Medici are again dominant in Florence, and I am losing Tuscany. . . . Maximilian Sforza has recovered Milan. . . . The petty disorders are beginning afresh. . . . They will have to bring in the French, the Germans, the Swiss, the Spaniards—in brief, the greater disorders to crush the less—and to take in hand the whole work of reconstruction at fresh expense. . . . I am in terrible pain. . . . I am dying. . . .

A PHYSICIAN: Your Holiness must not be so excited.

JULIUS II.: I have lived in the compass of a narrow circle. To check the breaking-up, it was necessary to destroy the petty tyrants. . . . To destroy the tyrants, we needed the foreigners. . . . With the foreigners, there is no more Italy. . . . Do you know that, swarthy-face?

PHYSICIAN: His Holiness' pulse is growing sensibly weaker, and he is wandering.

JULIUS II.: Here I am in my bed . . . nailed down . . . Michael Angelo . . . Raphael. . . . The one is working . . . but the other? . . . He is with some woman. . . . And the Bramante, what is he doing? . . . Alfonso of Ferrara . . . the traitor! . . . My head's awhirl. . . . I am not sure of the Venetians. . . .

BIBBIENA: His Holiness' words are no longer plain. . . .

PHYSICIAN: It is only a matter of minutes.

JULIUS II.: Intellect . . . genius . . . life . . . savagery . . .

nothing that holds together . . . that is the Italian! . . . What will be the end?

CARDINAL OF SION: Give him some drops of cordial.

JULIUS II. (rising upright from his bed): Death to the French! Death to Alfonso of Ferrara! Drive them from Italy, from every hole and corner of Italy!

Falls back on his bed and dies.

BIBBIENA: The Pope is dead!

END OF THE THIRD PART

FOURTH PART

LEO X.

ROME.

The Sistine Chapel.—Part of it is littered with immense scaffoldings. On the walls and ceilings are frescoes in the making. Some portions are completed ; in several places the design appears bare, more or less prepared. Michael Angelo, standing ; he works with energy. Il Granacci seated a few yards from him on a stool, in the midst of heaps of chalk, colour-pots, joists and utensils of every description.

GRANACCI: Your reflections are not cheerful, master.

MICHAEL ANGELO: That is my view of things.

GRANACCI: The arts have never been so flourishing! Never have such beautiful works been brought to light! How many illustrious, nay, superhuman painters, sculptors, architects! . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO: I know no superhuman men. This language is ridiculous. Do not blaspheme.

GRANACCI: Blasphemy, if you will ; I regard you as a demi-god, and others are of my opinion. Do not raise your eye-brows, but let me continue. Every day, almost, we join in festivals the like of which has never before been conceived. Here in Rome, as in Florence, in Venice, in Milan, in Bologna, in Naples, the lofty inventions of the ancients in this kind of magnificence are far surpassed. Of scholars, of poets, of writers there is no lack. New ones are continually arising ; there is Sannazaro, Sadoleto, Bembo, Navagiero, and the inimitable, the sublime Ariosto ; there is Bibbiena with his *Calandria*, and Master Niccolò Machiavelli with his *Mandragora*. What more can I say? Pope Leo X. and his Cardinals appear to my intoxicated imagination as the equals of great Jove and the gods of the Pantheon, and moreover they dwell in an Olympus infinitely more beautiful than that of their mythical precursors—seeing that that ancient Olympus was established by old Cœlus, a poor god who had no taste and no wit ; whereas to-day, it is we artists who have created the firmament, it is we who embellish it, illuminating it every hour with glorious tints, making it shine with dazzling stars ; and I assure you that where you set your hand, where Master Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Sansovino, Titian, and so many others are working, the achievement is immortal.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You are a chatterer, Granacci, and a blind one, incapable of realising the meanness of what charms you, and the profound weakness of these men who delight you and who are worth so little.

GRANACCI: Then prove to me that I am wrong, since you are so resolved to depreciate everything.

MICHAEL ANGELO: That will not be difficult. State your absurd propositions, and I will answer you.

GRANACCI: The Pope is the most enthusiastic patron of art that the world has ever known. You cannot deny that his benefits rain down upon us like an unceasing and most delicious manna.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Pope Leo X. is not a lover of the arts. He is a lover of luxury, and that is quite a different thing. All that glitters and brings him praise seems to him worthy of his patronage, and his only intention is that the arts shall minister to his vanity. What they express concerns him but little. The first of mortals who practised luxury began, perhaps, to smooth the way by which the arts came into the world; but the second banished the arts in order to replace them by bombast and falsehood.

GRANACCI: Ah, dear master, how you love to condemn! The Pope, our great Pope Leo X., how harshly you judge him! Do you, then, prefer the austere spirit of his predecessor?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Julius II. was the only true prince that my eyes have ever beheld. He was not a man for fleshly enjoyment. He conceived nothing but the imposing, and admitted nothing but strength. His sole preoccupation, in all matters, was to create and leave behind him the Church triumphant crushing beneath her sinewy foot the resistance of the impious. He aimed at reforming the whole clergy, at driving the barbarians from Italy; if he repressed the revolts of the barons, of the Colonna, the Vitelli, the Orsini, he also saw to it that the city was properly policed, and in his time . . . a sight never seen before! . . . no thief or cutpurse dared to risk his villainous face in the streets of Rome! From his

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artists he demanded great monuments, vast frescoes, immense canvases; he thought only of the gigantic, as befitted so imperious a soul as was his. I have lost everything in losing this noble master; but art, I say, art the heavenly, art that is Venus Urania, and not the licentious Venus of the streets, that art has lost still more!

GRANACCI: I cannot see at all what grounds you have for making such peculiar statements. Hardly had the Conclave delivered to Leo X. the keys of St. Peter, than the Pontiff surrounded himself with distinguished writers and poets; he summoned and chose as secretaries the amiable Sadoleto, of whom I was just speaking, and the elegant Bembo. You he ordered to proceed with the works begun. . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO: He tore me away from the tomb of Julius II., my favourite work, at which I laboured with my entire soul, and which will never see the light of day. It will remain there, in my head . . . a stillborn child. . . . Do you think that is a trifling vexation?

GRANACCI: I agree, it is a great misfortune; but it only proves that, like all who pay artists, the Pope has his whims. He would rather that you occupied yourself with his glory and pleasure than with the apotheosis of his predecessor, to whom he assuredly bore a very lukewarm affection. . . . But here is a visitor for you.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Another intruder! . . . I'll send him packing. . . . Messer, whoever you are, do not trouble to climb this ladder. Beside the fact that it is rough and unsteady, I have no time to talk with anyone.

MACHIAVELLI (loudly from the back of the chapel): Most excellent Signor Michael Angelo, will you not allow an old friend, comrade and fellow-citizen to come and embrace you?

MICHAEL ANGELO (looking down from the top of the ladder): It is Signor Niccolò Machiavelli. . . . Come up, since you are there. You will permit me, I suppose, to go on with

my work, and you will spare yourself and me all idle compliments.

MACHIAVELLI: I am not such a fool as to risk any, knowing your temper as I do.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Where do you hail from?

MACHIAVELLI: From Florence. . . . I have come out of prison, as you may have learnt.

GRANACCI: Yes . . . you were entangled in Boscoli's conspiracy. . . .

MACHIAVELLI: That was a most atrocious slander; I am a devoted servant of the Medici house.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Devoted? . . . H'm! . . . Devoted. . . . I congratulate you . . . there are others to whom you have shown devotion.

MACHIAVELLI (shrugging his shoulders): We have all been young once! I was caught in the snare of Fra Girolamo Savonarola's vagaries, as all the world knows.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Vagaries, if you will—that is what they call it when we recommend honour, uprightness and chastity. Yet the best thing in your life, Messer Niccolò, will prove to have been that error of your youth.

MACHIAVELLI: Perhaps you are right, perhaps you are wrong; what is certain is that this kind of merit, humanity being what it is, could never bring forth anything good for myself or for others.

MICHAEL ANGELO: So you reproach yourself with having once sought the good of religion? I have a strong desire to nail your portrait in the shape of a grinning devil somewhere on this wall.

MACHIAVELLI: That would be a great honour for me. In holy theology we have to believe that the most cunning of devils working to-day for the glory of hell were, in their beginnings, good little angels seeing no further than the ends of their noses. What has corrupted them? Experience. In

short, I used to believe, like you, like Granacci, like so many others, in the possibility of living at Florence and at the same time keeping honest. It was a great misfortune for me, and I thus brewed myself a potion of disgrace from which, from time to time, I have to swallow mouthfuls. That is what I have done just lately. Nevertheless, I have finished the third act of my *Mandragora*.

MICHAEL ANGELO: That will be a fine work, Messer Niccolò; for if you are a poor politician, you are an excellent man of letters, and that is some consolation.

MACHIAVELLI: A poor politician? Your verdict seems to me severe—but perhaps, taking all in all, you are right. What, have I meditated so much on history, commented so much on Livy, read so much of our Florentine annals and examined the governments and characters of all nations, only to recognise in the end and confess to myself that I am but a poor politician?

He sits down on a stool in a corner and remains pensive, his legs and arms crossed, looking fixedly before him.

A poor politician! I have, in fact, occasionally been mistaken, and the worst of all is that when I was right I was unable to inspire confidence in my ideas. I will plead as my excuse that there is no science more conjectural than that of politics, not one in which forecasts are so liable to be falsified by unforeseen incidents, by the slightest breath of wind. Why, if sureness of vision, resoluteness in execution, genius in manipulation were enough to ensure success, the Duke of Valentinois would undoubtedly have founded an Italian kingdom and determined our future.

MICHAEL ANGELO: The result would have been a thing to make God the Father blush.

MACHIAVELLI: God the Father saw Heliogabalus reign, and never blushed at all; He sees every day the worst rogues and ruffians pass success on from one to the other, and He is

none the less cheerful. The late Julius II., excepting the man I have just mentioned, was surpassed by none in greatness of aspiration and energy of action.

MICHAEL ANGELO: True.

MACHIAVELLI: The opposition to him consisted solely of fools and madmen (I except the Duke of Ferrara); but as it happened, he was old and had to die.

MICHAEL ANGELO: We shall never see his like.

MACHIAVELLI: No! It remains no less true that the world continues to go round and puts up with what it can find. To-day is the day of glory for fools. Sforza of Milan is not worth a hollow nutshell. Fregoso, at Genoa, is an intriguer of a low order, with treason in his hand, an ear for every rumour, aiming neither high nor low. Francesco Maria of Urbino, a wretched aper of the Duke of Valentinois, gives the dagger-thrust as nimbly as his master, but that is all; he will totter on his legs until he falls. The Medici of Florence would not last three days if they did not reign at Rome with the Pope. The Venetians live, will live, will be strong, glorious, powerful, but they are not chrysalides destined to take wings strong enough to rise into the atmosphere beyond the middle region. Thus, in point of fact, nothing is left in Italy but three powers: the Pope, the French, and the Spaniards.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I am very pleased to hear you talk. Well, now expound to us what is your view of each of these powers and whom you consider likely to be left supreme.

MACHIAVELLI: I tell you once more, I have learnt to my cost that if astrology is uncertain, politics are scarcely less so. I have no wish to play the prophet. So far as the French are concerned, here they are, for the moment, overthrown, driven out; with the exception of the citadel of Milan and two or three hamlets, they have lost their footing in Italy. Their new King, M. d'Angoulême, seems more concerned with beating the big drum and amusing himself than with carrying out

glorious enterprises. Hence I think that Pope Leo X., who detests these French, not only through having been their prisoner at Ravenna, but for many other minor reasons, must regard himself as being rid of them.

GRANACCI: So much the better! I am a good Florentine, and abhor these conceited braggarts. They have never been frankly either with the Republicans or with the opposite party. Now what do you think of the Spaniards?

MACHIAVELLI: Their King Charles is quite young; who knows what he will turn out to be? He is the son of a handsome fellow who was somewhat of a nonentity, and of a poor madwoman. A bad omen! To make matters worse, as he is more of a Fleming than a Castilian, and Burgundian and Austrian to boot, his interests are scattered everywhere. Looking at the sum of his forces, one would think that he was immensely powerful; but the separate elements do not hold together and are liable to clash. If the possessor of such scraps wishes to guard his interests carefully, he must spend his life in rushing from one place to another. Moreover, it will not be easy for him always to arrive in time. To go from Valladolid to Bruges, he needs the permission of King Francis. Then, too, there arises another obstacle in the shape of his own ambition, if he has any. When his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, dies, young Charles will, no doubt, aspire to the Imperial crown. You can already see the conflict; France, too, turns her gaze to this quarter; England cherishes a hope of it; the Electors have their projects. . . . These people will consume each other; King Charles, already so occupied with each of the innumerable rooms of his own house, will become the fifth of a band of rivals; in consequence, he will have only a slight authority in Italy, and from that I conclude that Pope Leo X. will reign there at his will. I do not know whether my calculations deceive me, but they cannot be far wrong.

MICHAEL ANGELO: But, suppose that, by some chance, Francis I. were a better man than you think, and that Charles, on his side, lacked neither wit nor heart?

MACHIAVELLI: On those two suppositions we can prophesy nothing further. All will depend on the strength of brain and appetite possessed by these two rulers. The impossible may become an everyday occurrence. . . . It is not often that great princes appear.

GRANACCI: You are right. Nevertheless, in these times, even the weak have strength; all grows on a large scale, and kings must needs attain greatness more easily than others.

MACHIAVELLI: I have met in my life more incapables and more possessors of small wits than I had reason to expect. You will therefore allow me not to reckon too much on the blossoming of merit, and to point out to you that, at this moment, the one who is nearest to gaining everything is the Pope.

MICHAEL ANGELO: My opinion of him is not high.

MACHIAVELLI: Nor mine, either; I regard him simply as a respectable aristocrat, of easy manners, taking care of his mind as he takes care of his hands. But, just as with the aforesaid admirable hands he possesses, in his body, a pair of big, prominent, goggling eyes that see nothing (which makes him resemble Nero—with whom he has also in common the trait of being a lover of all curiosities); so in his mind, which is cultivated with such care, one notices defects that deform the whole. He displays exquisite taste in everything, and he has a kind heart. He talks no less valiantly to the vilest buffoons than to Sadoleto or Ariosto; he orders frescoes and statues and makes Raphael paint pictures, because these are expensive trinkets, and, to achieve more outward glory, the Pope would willingly make a star his plaything; but rest assured that in his heart of hearts he prefers a hare hunt on his estate at Magliana, or a dainty supper at the Vatican, to

the contemplation of all your masterpieces. At his suppers, they serve up balls of roast hair and straw paste which make the guests grimace, to the exceeding joy of the Sovereign Pontiff, while a vigorous combat of burlesque invective brings to light all the talents of Evangelista Tarasconi and of Aretino.

MICHAEL ANGELO: That is almost what I have just said to Granacci. Nothing can be expected from such a man.

MACHIAVELLI: Pardon me—all things considered, events are beginning to take shape under his hands so well that, without having the enthusiasm of Savonarola, or the resolute ambition of the Duke of Valentinois, or the energy of Julius II., and all the while that he plays his games and blows his soap-bubbles, he will end by giving us a united Italy. He will retake Naples, a fief of the Church, from that unhappy Charles of Spain, who does not know how to keep what he has—and he cannot fail, so easy is the task, to keep the King of England, who is a pedant, a scribbler, and a blind devotee of the Holy See, so close to the side of France, that Francis I. will never dare to leave his country in order to come and meddle with ours. Then Leo will seize the Milanese and keep it, as Julius kept the Romagna.

MICHAEL ANGELO: In a way that is a rather fine prospect, yet it does not enchant me.

MACHIAVELLI: Nor me either. I know very well why! Italy has never been so brilliant as to-day. However, this brightness is not pure. There is too much vice, too much corruption, and if we fall into the hands of the most corrupt of powers and under the sway of the most grasping of courts that ever existed, Italy will without doubt be delivered from the foreigner and united in one whole; but, before a few years have elapsed, we shall see her as exhausted morally as physically. The monks and the priests will have enervated her beyond hope of recovery.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I believe you; I am a devoted son

of Holy Church; but so long as the clerics are what they are, I have little wish for them as rulers. In short, we live in a most unhappy age.

MACHIAVELLI: As unhappy as can be, and I have no hope left in anything.

GRANACCI: May heaven take pity on you both! If we may believe you, we are sinking into decadence. Tell me, Messer Niccolò, are you in earnest? Do you hold forth thus before my master and in the Sistine chapel? Have you ever known a greater age? Come, Messer Niccolò, you speak without thinking. As for me, I bless heaven every day for having been born at such a time. When I talk to anyone, I sometimes pay no heed to what he answers me—I look at his features and say to myself—there is a character whose name will endure on some page of history! I scent in the air a perfume of ambrosia and immortality: I breathe it with all my power. Everywhere I admire, I rejoice, and you, you both come and allege. . . . Away with you! you are men of saturnine minds, of diseased imaginations, ingrates, yes, the worst of ingrates, for you ought to show yourself more thankful towards God for the great things which he has given you, each after his own fashion, the power to do.

MACHIAVELLI: I do not know whether I do great things, but what I am quite sure of is that if the most reverend Cardinal da Bibbiena had not this morning put half-a-dozen crowns into my hands, I should not have the wherewithal to dine. I will let this be my last word, and so, Master Michael Angelo and my dear Granacci, I leave you, happy to have seen you and wishing you both continued health.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Farewell, friend Messer Niccolò. See that you finish your *Mandragora*—it is your masterpiece!

ON THE PINCIAN HILL.

In the midst of the groups of planes and cypresses, on the turf, are seen in the distance gatherings of persons of different conditions, come here to walk and enjoy the beauty of the evening. Citizens, priests, monks, women, young people, children; some sitting or half lying on carpets; others walking; the former eating fruits or cakes, the latter gravely conversing. Bursts of laughter are heard. The weather is glorious, the horizon immense.

In the midst of several girls and young men, for the most part crowned with flowers and richly attired, a boy of twenty is reading verses.

BOY:

Star of my heaven, sorceress divine,
Thine eyes, where fires by love enkindled play,
Thy lips, fair fruit to tempt the God of Wine,
Thy brow, as pure as is the dawn of day,

Thy hair, each curling tress of ebon fine,
Thy foot, thy hand, that draw all eyes their way,
Thy body, limned so fair that every line
Had needs been copied by the Grecian's clay,

Thy childlike glee, thy openness and trust,
The charm that's sprinkled like some jewel-dust
O'er thy least action, O belovèd maid;

What worth these treasures—easy 'tis to write them—
Before these three words—with a smile to light them—
"I love thee!"—had those words been ever said?

Laughter and applause; a girl rises, claps her hands and darts towards the poet.

GIRL: It's for me, Troile, that you wrote that? For me, for me, for me alone?

BOY: Upon my soul, Giacinta, it is assuredly for you and for no other.

GIRL: Well, come, here is your reward!

Throws herself into his arms, kisses him, and puts a crown on his head.

ANOTHER GIRL: As you, Emilio, cannot address a single verse to me, you will at least have enough wit to tell us a story. Sit down there, and speak—we will listen.

EMILIO: I hardly know what to tell you.

ALL (clapping their hands): Come, no excuses; a story, a story!

EMILIO: Since there is no way out of it, know that once upon a time there lived at Verona an old merchant named Ser Jacopo, who had a very young and beautiful wife. His neighbour, one of the most gallant knights of the town, had formed the habit of looking over the wall, into Ser Jacopo's garden, and—— (The story goes on.)

Three citizens pass, walking side by side.

FIRST CITIZEN: I am perfectly certain of what I say. My son Giulio is but ten years old, and he will certainly be one of the lights of the age. That is Fra Filippo's opinion. He does not hide it, and repeats it to all whom he meets.

SECOND CITIZEN: My son Tomasso is quite the equal of your son Giulio, and he is only nine, not a day more . . . or rather, yes, eight days more, for he was born on the 14th of June, nine years ago, and we are now at the 22nd. So he is nine years and eight days, and the Padre Roberto exclaims to me every morning: Messer Pompeo, your son will be . . . what do you call it, Messer Annibale?

FIRST CITIZEN: Will be one of the lights of the age!

SECOND CITIZEN: That is exactly what the Padre Roberto says to me.

THIRD CITIZEN: Good friends and neighbours, I congratulate you heartily. Fra Filippo and Padre Roberto must be men of great renown.

FIRST CITIZEN: Fra Filippo has been my wife's confessor, since she began to commit her first sin! We have every confidence in him. I should like to know if he could be mistaken on such a point!

SECOND CITIZEN: With us it is just the same. When I married, the Padre Roberto was already, as it were, master of the house. My wife would not buy an egg without asking his advice, and when she is in a bad temper, which happens fairly often, I don't know what would become of me if this Padre

LOVE SCENE

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Roberto were not there to soothe her. So you can imagine that when he says what he says of my son, I can feel assured that it is true.

FIRST CITIZEN: I realise that you can. As for me, I have two quite ordinary sons; one is eighteen, the other sixteen. I shall make the first a merchant and the second a lawyer.

SECOND CITIZEN: Pardon me, but I entirely disapprove of your course. Padre Roberto would shrug his shoulders if he heard you.

FIRST CITIZEN: So would Fra Filippo. I am glad that on this point he is at one with Padre Roberto. He would not for the world allow our boy to become a merchant or a lawyer. The mere idea would send him into a towering rage.

THIRD CITIZEN: But what, then, are the ideas of your worthy clerics as regards your children?

FIRST CITIZEN: Ideas full of wisdom. My son will be a painter.

SECOND CITIZEN: And mine a sculptor. In our time it is only artists who earn a heap of money as big as themselves, become great personages, and snap their fingers at the world.

THIRD CITIZEN: It is true that at this moment the artists are at the top of the tree. It was not so in my young days. They were looked upon as beggars and starvelings.

FIRST CITIZEN: Beggars? starvelings? Pray look down there, on the road, at the foot of the hill.

THIRD CITIZEN: Well, I am looking.

FIRST CITIZEN: What do you see?

SECOND CITIZEN: Ah, yes . . . it's true. . . . Tell us, what do you see?

THIRD CITIZEN: I see nothing . . . unless it be two lords mounted on richly-caparisoned horses and followed by serving-men. What is there strange in that?

FIRST CITIZEN: You take those for lords! Wipe the glasses of your spectacles! It is Master Marc-Antonio Raimondi, engraver, and Master Giulio, one of the pupils of Master Raphael. Neither are of better or worse middle-class

families than I, and certainly if their parents had made them merchants or lawyers, they would not cut such a dash.

SECOND CITIZEN: Do you know what Master Valerio Belli earns by carving little heads on cameos? And Masters Bridone and Marchetto, singers and guitar players? And Padre Mariano, who at one meal eats four hundred eggs and twenty carp? I tell you, to make one's mark in this world, one must be an artist.

THIRD CITIZEN: Doubtless; but it is not everyone who can devote himself to such a craft; a certain natural talent is needed, and for my part I frankly confess that if I were compelled to swallow twenty carp at dinner or to build a cathedral, I should be hard put to it.

FIRST CITIZEN: That is only because you lack practice. Padre Filippo has told me a hundred times that if I had been taught when young I should certainly make as fine statues in marble as Master Buonarotti himself.

SECOND CITIZEN: That is perfectly true. My son shall be a sculptor and dine with the Pope. There is no sensible father of a family who does not nowadays look upon things as we do; my opinion is that the arts are the finest thing in the world, and I am resolved to set old-fashioned prejudices at naught and march with the times.

Seated under a tree, two Dominicans and an Augustinian monk; two Cardinals pass, talking and laughing, mounted on two magnificently harnessed mules; at their side, on a Spanish jenny, a Venetian noble dressed in black velvet; numerous gentlemen-in-waiting and servants in fine liveries.

FIRST DOMINICAN: I do not know these most reverend signors. Do you know their names?

AUGUSTINIAN: Really, you do not know Cardinals Sadoleto and Bibbiena? The black-bearded gentleman who accompanies them is Signor Andrea Navagiero, patrician of Venice, no less famous as man of letters than they are themselves.

SECOND DOMINICAN: I am curious to know what

Sadoleto and Bibbiena have done in the way of pious works to deserve their cardinal's hats.

AUGUSTINIAN: The first, Father, one must render him this justice, has at least done no great harm. He is a good Latinist; the roundnesses of his Latin period are admired almost as much as those of Bembo. A good fellow, without malice; so long as he is allowed to amuse himself, he hurts no one.

FIRST DOMINICAN: Bibbiena I know from what well-educated people have told me of him. As to his morals there is nothing good to be said. He loves the gay and easy life, and has written the *Calandra*—a fine comedy, but not the work of a theologian. Pope Julius II. made this man his confidant; Pope Leo has always made him his, so that there are hardly any negotiations or affairs of State in which he has not a finger. When he has time to spare, he spends it in the studio of Master Raphael, his great friend, where more scandalous than edifying things are said and done.

SECOND DOMINICAN: What arrogance! What pride! What a display of luxuries! Where can they go, these worldings, surrounded by their slaves? What is their purpose, these proud Babylonian satraps, in the midst of their gay talk and their bursts of laughter? Assuredly, they do not go to chant the offices!

AUGUSTINIAN: Pardon me, reverend Father, that is precisely what they do. They chant the offices. . . . I mean their offices. A brilliant assembly of wits, poets, artists, ladies, prelates and lords is assembling to-day with the banker of Siena, Agostino Chigi; and there, they are proposing to celebrate a sacrifice to the goddess Venus, with doves, milk, flowers, sonnets, madrigals, strings of Sapphic and Adonic verses in Greek, Latin, and the vulgar tongue, and not one of the customary rites will be accomplished without the authority of some great poet. Signor Gabriele Merino, who has just been made Archbishop of Bari because of the excellence of his voice, will sing the epodes and play the seven-stringed lyre;

Francesco Paolosa, the new Archdeacon, will be heard on the viol d'amore; Piero Aaron, Florentine, Knight of St. John and Canon of Rimini, will accompany the goddess's praises on his rebec; there will be a quantity of flute-players for the concert, and the auditors will be crowned with roses. The altar is in white marble with yellow veins; Girolamo Santa Croce of Naples, in carving it, has produced a miracle. The feast that ends the ceremony will be of an abundance and a sumptuousness worthy of the most illustrious epicures of antiquity. Leo X. is to be present at the ceremony, but under a mask. I hope you are now re-assured as to the devoutness of our Cardinals?

FIRST DOMINICAN: How scandalous! It is clear that the ancient paganism, aided by universal degeneration, is again taking hold of us on all sides. One hears of nothing but events similar to those you describe. Here they sacrifice to Apollo, there to Pomona; at Venice, they have not been ashamed to descend to the god of gardens.* All is over with decency, and I know not what is to become of faith.

AUGUSTINIAN: Faith will be like the star, darkened by rain-clouds, but nevertheless shining in the sky.

SECOND DOMINICAN: The eclipse, I fear, will last a long time. Our Father Savonarola wished to fight the scourge, and perished in the attempt. Who will triumph where this great saint found defeat?

AUGUSTINIAN: Perhaps a far lesser saint. We must not be discouraged, we must not give up the struggle. Good should not keep silent in the face of evil.

FIRST DOMINICAN: Yet it does keep silent. Since the death of our blessed brother, no one raises a voice, and the Antichrist wins the day.

AUGUSTINIAN: Let him beware! . . . Come nearer, Fathers, and let us speak low; I have important news to tell. Come to this bench, apart . . . there . . . now we are all three safe.

SECOND DOMINICAN: Before telling us anything, and

* Priapus.—Tr.

before arousing the hopes which you seem to wish to excite in us, pray look at the shameful scene that is being enacted a little way off. Do you see, in the grass, those Franciscans fighting with porters and the girls who follow them? If I am not mistaken, we can hear one of these infamous monks celebrating, in rhymes as coarse as himself, the virtues of Montefiascone wine.

AUGUSTINIAN: Things have become so bad that they must take a turn for the better. Listen to me.

SECOND DOMINICAN: My heart is scarcely open to hope.

AUGUSTINIAN: We have received singular letters at the convent from our brothers in Germany.

FIRST DOMINICAN: What has happened?

AUGUSTINIAN: In our house at Wittenberg—a big German city containing a fairly learned University—lives a doctor, a certain Dom Martin Luther, professor of civil law, one of the best-versed men in holy letters known to our age. This great man has just declaimed in public and with admirable courage against the sale of indulgences. What is more, he has so learnedly quoted the texts and so profoundly moved his audiences by the boldness of his language regarding the abuses which we were just now lamenting, that first of all his colleagues, then the people, and (this is indeed important) his Electoral Grace the Duke of Saxony, have placed themselves under his guidance. That is what I wanted to confide to you.

FIRST DOMINICAN: And have not the Franciscans, collectors of the profits of indulgences, entered a complaint here?

AUGUSTINIAN: They have. We naturally supported our brother, and I am assured that the Holy Father, feeling much esteem for Dom Martin's talent, is not inclined to condemn him. I conclude from this that Heaven is speaking to the Sovereign Pontiff's heart, and may lead him to reflection—and these hopes make me tremble.

FIRST DOMINICAN: May you succeed in your efforts, dear

son of St. Augustine! The closest bonds unite us to you! Your glorious father inspired our St. Thomas, and if, after the lamentable death of Savonarola, martyred by the brothers of St. Francis, we have to see your worthy Luther exposed to the malice of these same persecutors, think how our hearts will suffer in unison with yours!

SECOND DOMINICAN: No, Father! Do not give way to discouragement; even in the midst of the direst storm, God supports his Church. Let us hope that the Augustinians will achieve the salvation of religion, and let us console ourselves for the thought that we have not succeeded ourselves by reflecting that at any rate we have tried.

AUGUSTINIAN: The blood of your martyr will produce a rich harvest.

FIRST DOMINICAN: The *Angelus* is ringing!

All the bells of Rome begin to ring; the numerous groups assembled on the Monte Pincio stop talking; the women on their knees, the men bare-headed, make the sign of the cross and recite the angelic Salutation.

AUGUSTINIAN: Let us pray like this crowd, and, knowing what we must ask of heaven, let us add this brief supplication: "Most Holy Mother of God, see that the reform of the Church be given to us, for, without this remedy, all is over with Christendom!"

The three monks kneel and remain absorbed in prayer.

MILAN.

The Ducal palace.—A room richly decorated with carved chests, panoplies, vases of gold and silver; seated at a sumptuous table, King Francis I. sups gaily, in the company of his mistress Madame Marie Gaudin, Florimond Robertet, Clément Marot, with M. de Piennes, M. de Lautrec, and some other courtiers. Squires, pages in the royal livery, walk from one place to another, offering dishes to the guests and serving drink.

THE KING: No, the Pope did not expect to see me come so soon! I have swooped down on Italy as rapidly as my predecessors; but they soon went back again, whereas I shall not let myself be turned out.

DE LAUTREC: I drink to the invincible Mars, to the knight of knights!

THE KING: Thanks, Lautrec. Besides, the times are changed; I will not have us French treated any longer as barbarians and know-nothings. Why could not we, as well as the people on this side of the Alps, acquire fine manners, abandon all vulgar ways, and grow used to the study of letters?

MAROT: Knowing how to wield a sword and sport with a lance is no reason for playing the part of a brute all one's life!

THE KING: Assuredly not; but, on my word as a gentleman! we shall have a hard task in driving this truth into the thick skulls of our comrades. Except you who are assembled here to-night, and a few others, our French are a pack of clumsy clowns who can learn nothing! The more ignorant they are, the more highly they value themselves. The Count Castiglione said so to me the other evening, and he was not wrong.

ROBERTET: He was only too right. Did Your Majesty notice the smile which passed the lips of the Duchess of Ferrara the other day, when you introduced to her that Lord of Picardy, who was so eager to tell her why the St. Maclon of his village church was far more beautiful than the masterpiece of Ghiberti that was offered to our admiration?—"Death of Christ!" cried the honest soldier as he twirled his moustache, "our St.

Maclon is all painted in colour from head to foot, whereas your statue is only a white stone!"

THE KING: I confess, Robertet, that when I heard those words and saw Madam Lucrezia's look, I felt myself redden up to my eyes. In truth, we are nothing but clods! But I will change all that. I most certainly intend that France shall become as beautiful as Italy and no less adorned. What has existed up to now in our kingdom we will destroy from top to bottom, and Paris and my other noble cities shall all display to the sun as many beautiful buildings and masterpieces of art as are to be seen on this side of the Alps. Away with our old cathedrals, our castles of ancient time, and all the coarse practices of our forefathers! If God grants me life, I warrant you we shall not cut less of a figure in the world by our services to Apollo and his nine lovely companions than we have done hitherto by our services to the god of war, and perhaps also the goddess of love. What think you of that, madam?

MARIE GAUDIN (in low tones): Ah, Sire, how well your Majesty can turn charming phrases, and how your words fall into the ear like a delicious morsel for the mind!

THE KING: Flatteress! . . . Who was that trim gallant who was seen going into your rooms this morning?

MARIE GAUDIN: Tremble, Sire, it was an enemy of the infidel!

THE KING: In that case I have nothing to fear. . . . But who was it?

MARIE GAUDIN: I tell you. . . . A Knight of St. John.

THE KING: This bold champion finds it more pleasant to visit fair ladies than to go in quest of the Turks.

MARIE GAUDIN: You declare sometimes that it is far more dangerous. . . . Who tells you that the cruelty is less?

THE KING: Upon my honour, you puzzle me!

MARIE GAUDIN: Monsieur de Lautrec! . . . Monsieur de Lautrec! . . . The King is jealous. . . . Do you know of whom?

THE KING: God condemn me if I am jealous!
DE LAUTREC: One might be so for a less worthy cause.
MARIE GAUDIN: Yes, the King is jealous of a Knight of St. John who came to my rooms this morning—and the gallant left me two pledges!
THE KING: Two pledges? . . . His heart and . . .
MARIE GAUDIN: His heart, was, I think, thrown into the bargain; there was no question of it; and as I am in an indiscreet mood, I will confess all to you: the handsome messenger came to me not on his own account, but for the sake of another.
THE KING: Of whom?
MARIE GAUDIN (laughing): Of another, I tell you, inquisitive that you are! Do you think that I want to tell all?
DE PIENNES: Behold our lord on tenterhooks.
THE KING: Devil take me if you speak the truth! I care as little for the sender as for the envoy . . . for the master as for the valet. . . . Whoever had an idea of conveying love letters through a Knight of St. John?
MARIE GAUDIN: I did not tell you that I had received a love letter. . . . Yet you guess right, which proves the subtlety of your mind. . . . But I have not yet confessed all! . . . Wait—don't let your wits wander! . . . look!

She puts a case on the table and takes a paper which she waves in the air.

GUESTS (all at once): Let us see! Let us see!
THE KING (taking the box): You will allow me, gentlemen, to be the first to look? I am a trifle interested, I believe, and am showing myself indulgent. To begin with, the case is charming . . . ivory, carved and inlaid with silver and gold. . . . These turquoises and rubies are very fine. . . . A prettily chiselled key. . . . Must it be opened?
MARIE GAUDIN: How timid you are! . . . Open, you are permitted!
THE KING: I obey. . . Ah, belly of Mahomet! It's most gallant! . . . Yes, it's most gallant, one must admit! Only

Italians would do things in this way and offer presents to ladies in so graceful a fashion! Look gentlemen—it's the Pope's portrait set in great diamonds.

MARIE GAUDIN: I admire the portrait, but I am not insensible to the frame either.

MAROT: Be sure, madam, that His Holiness foresaw that!

ROBERTET: What otherwise is the use, pray, of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost?

THE KING: Was this what the Knight of St. John brought?

MARIE GAUDIN: Yes, with this letter. . . . You deserve not to have it given you. . . . You did not deign to be impatient even for a moment!

THE KING: Is there harm in believing blindly in the loyalty of the loved one?

MARIE GAUDIN: I should be a fine sort of a fool if I decked myself in that virtue! There! . . . read!

THE KING (opening the letter): "To the noble and illustrious lady, Madame Marie Gaudin . . . our beloved daughter in Christ." . . . ah, wait until I have read it first. . . . The Holy Father praises your beauty . . . then your virtue. . .

MARIE GAUDIN: He might have dispensed with that last point.

THE KING: Next, he acquaints you with his desire to recover Parma and Piacenza, and begs you to ask me to give them back. . . . If you will pardon my saying so, the intercession will not be of much use to him.

MARIE GAUDIN: I hope it will not; but the diamonds are beautiful, are they not, Master Clément?

MAROT: Alas, madam, less beautiful than your eyes!

THE KING: Will you be silent, serpent? In a word, our poor Pope tries to repair the torn meshes of his net by means of the most charming hands in the world. . . . He knows that these little fingers hold my arms captive.

MARIE GAUDIN: Really? The arms that fought so valiantly with the sword, the other day, at Marignano?

THE KING: Yes, this mere little finger, which I kiss with your permission, could strike me down more quickly and effectively than the halberds of the Swiss, and nevertheless. . . .
MARIE GAUDIN: And as my paladin is so courteous, I expect him to confirm what I declared this morning to the envoy of the Holy Father.
THE KING: What did you declare? You frighten me.
MARIE GAUDIN: I said to the Knight of St. John: "Sir, if the King, in his filial respect for the Church, felt inclined to comply with the Pope's wish and restore him Parma and Piacenza—which his predecessor, King Louis, would never agree to do—and if by chance the King granted me the honour of asking my opinion, I should throw myself at my lord's feet and entreat him never to yield a jot of his kingly rights." . . . And as he was somewhat astonished at the liveliness of my language, I handed him the case and the letter, but he refused to take it back, and took his leave with profound obeisances.
GUESTS: Well answered! Bravely done! Long live Madame Marie Gaudin!
THE KING (whispers): To-morrow you shall have the pearls you covet, and I promise to pay for the estate which you are buying in Touraine.
MARIE GAUDIN: Sire, it is needless. . . . I could not love you more dearly! Have you bought Da Vinci's "Gioconda"?
THE KING: Yes, and at Florence I have bidden Master Andrea del Sarto obtain for me all the masterpieces that come under his ken. The King of Spain, I know, has the same aspirations as I; but, be sure, my friends, I will not yield to him on this ground any more than on others. After the death of Maximilian—an event that we cannot have long to wait for—Charles will aspire to the Imperial crown; on my word as a gentleman, it is I who shall have it! I have taken all the necessary steps. The son of Joanna the Mad also wants to carry matters with a high hand in Italy; I will twist

his arm for him! He wishes to gain a reputation for liking men of learning and deserving their praises; I shall outstrip him in this sphere, and the glory will remain with me. Ha! it would be fine to see Salamanca more learned than the University of Paris.

MAROT: I weep for joy! France has never known such a monarch! Your name, Sire, will be illustrious down to the last ages of mankind!

THE KING: Ah, my friends, may God hear you and raise me above all my rivals! Glory—yes, I crave for glory! Much glory and much joy, much gaiety and much pleasure, and more than much of all that adds grace to life! Splendour, brilliance, fame, love—more love than the heart can hold, infinite love, high, high above our heads!

MARIE GAUDIN: Long live the King!

ALL: Long live the King!

THE KING: As for His Holiness the Pope, my fair child, my dear friends, much good may his advances do him! The days are over when by terrifying the nations he could bend their princes.

ROBERTET: Did we not see your predecessor, King Louis, excommunicated by the late Pope Julius, and none the worse for it?

THE KING: We did! None of our subjects grew restive No one troubles any more about the Pope. Men know what the Pápal Court is worth, and how little its priests resemble the Apostles. Leo X. demands from Christians neither faith, hope, nor charity, but their purses, and I am resolved to check his extortions.

DE LAUTREC: I would rather see money in the pockets of the King and his servants than in those of the cardinals.

ROBERTET: No rational man thinks otherwise.

MARIE GAUDIN: Nor rational woman either.

THE KING: Upon my honour! We are quite as good at making the florins leap from my people's pockets as are the Borgia, the Rovere, or the Medici! But do you know that the Germans also are beginning to grow quite angry with the Papal tax-gatherers? I am curious to know what my brother Charles thinks of the rumblings at Wittenberg.

DE LAUTREC: Something foolish, if he does not take your Majesty's advice.

THE KING: I should not be sorry to see the Church reduced to the modest way of life enjoined by the Gospel.

MARIE GAUDIN: The Pope ought to give you the beautiful things of which he has, after all, no real need. You would give us a share, Sire, would you not?

THE KING: Upon my honour! I should never keep anything for myself. All for you, my beauty, and for my friends!

MARIE GAUDIN: I only want your heart. To your health, my Lord!

ALL: Long live the King! A thousand years, and more!

ROME.

A room in the Vatican.—Leo X. seated near a window; Cardinal da Bibbiena, Cardinal Bembo, Cardinal Sadoleto. At the back of the room, near the door, Karl von Maltitz, Saxon nobleman, waiting to be told to come forward.

LEO X.: I shall attend to this Wittenberg affair myself, and I hope to direct it in such a way as to put an end to the absurdities by which it has been complicated. This Luther, against whom the Franciscans declaim so loudly, is no fool; he is not an unlettered monk, as most of them are. He has wit, learning and reason. He writes to me in a most polite tone, and I shall support him against the Tetzels, the Ecciuses, and all that troop of ridiculous fanatics. Such men are trying to kindle a fire in Germany. I will not have it!

BIBBIENA: Your Holiness appears to me to take the path of justice and expediency.

LEO X.: Rest assured of that. There is no religious question at issue here; it is purely a formal difficulty. Our people have adopted crooked ways to obtain money, and I shall put our people in the wrong.

SADOLETO: If your Holiness' predecessors had always acted on such wise principles, we should have no occasion to deplore the lamentable stories of John Huss and Jerome of Prague.

LEO X.: And, above all, of Savonarola. You may be sure that I shall not allow that to begin again. This Fra Girolamo who, after all, was but an energumen, an enemy of my house, they have succeeded in making a saint through the absurd cruelty with which they treated him. Martin Luther will not obtain from my hand the honour of martyrdom.

BEMBO: This good Father writes in an admirable style.

LEO X.: I have the greatest distaste for the susceptibilities of the convent and the sacristy. The Pope is a great prince, do not lose sight of that truth; in a few years the only powers left on earth, beside him, will be the Emperor, the Kings of France and England, and the Turks. The other sovereigns

will be but rich lords without authority. Thus it is important that the Pope should not guide his conduct by the opinions and warnings of monks. Tell Herr von Maltitz to come forward.
SADOLETO: Come forward, Herr von Maltitz. His Holiness summons you.
VON MALTITZ: I am at his Holiness' orders, and crave the honour of kissing his feet.
LEO X. (making the sign of the Cross over him): Herr von Maltitz, we are old acquaintances. You have served me well. The captains-general of the Church have brought me such favourable reports of your exploits, your talents, and your loyalty, that in an important affair like the one I have to communicate to you, I considered it suitable to employ no other devoted servant than yourself.
VON MALTITZ: Most Holy Father, this moment rewards me beyond all my merits.
LEO X.: For the commission that I am about to give you I need a warrior and, at the same time, a supple courtier and a scholar. I can find these three personalities in you, and for that I bless my good fortune.
VON MALTITZ: All that lies in my power is assuredly at your Holiness' service.
LEO X.: You will go on my behalf to your natural Lord, Duke Frederick of Saxony. He is a prince of outstanding wisdom, and I am happy to know that he is respected by all wise monarchs and statesmen. You will tell him that I am pleased to see him grant protection to our dear son in Christ, Martin Luther. This Augustinian monk is a most learned doctor; I do not wish him to be harassed by clumsy and indiscreet persons, such as the inquisitor Tetzel, Eccius, the professor Hoffman and others appear to be. You will beg His Electoral Highness to put you into communication with Dom Martin, to intervene between us and the good Father so that the agreement may easily come about. We must not have evilly disposed persons continuing to injure the reputation of so clever a man by spreading a report that he is falling

from obedience, which I know him to be quite incapable of doing; and so as to testify to the august Elector, by irrefragable evidence, all my fatherly affection, you will deliver to His Highness the Golden Rose. I ordered one for him expressly.

VON MALTITZ: The Elector, my master, will certainly feel boundless gratitude.

LEO X.: Do not fail to convince him firmly, and Dom Martin as well, that I have no desire to raise foolish quarrels or acrimonious disputes. The Holy Father has learnt that many abuses have crept into the opinions held with more or less reason by doctors whose orthodoxy is perhaps not altogether above suspicion. Let us settle our differences without noise and in a spirit of mutual charity.

VON MALTITZ: Probably if we go to work in this way, the difficulties will vanish. Your Holiness breathes upon them so gently that not the slightest irritation can remain.

LEO X.: Cardinal Sadoleto, give me the two letters which are on that table.

SADOLETO: Here they are, Most Holy Father.

LEO X.: I hand them over to you, Herr von Maltitz. One is addressed to Herr Georg Spalatin, the other to the worthy Master Degenhard Pfeffinger. Among your Sovereign's counsellors, I know none who deserve so much consideration.

VON MALTITZ: They merit such an honour, perhaps, by their respect for the Apostolic See and their devotion to your sacred person.

LEO X.: I know, I know, Herr von Maltitz. You will beg them, in my name, to be good enough to show the Elector once more the real point at issue. It is essential that neither he nor Dom Martin should be in error about it. True, there has been some abuse in the sale of indulgences, and above all, I should not be surprised if irregularities have crept into the way of procedure. Let me hear of suitable remedies, and I am ready to apply them. The important thing is that the money with which the Apostolic Chamber has neither the

power nor the will to dispense should reach us as usual. The means are of small moment.

VON MALTITZ: I cannot imagine that henceforth the Elector intends to inflict any pecuniary loss on the Apostolic Chamber.

LEO X.: I do not believe so either, and in any case I should not care to admit it, for with this point, I frankly avow to you, serious embarrassment steps in. The more complaisant I am on other questions, the more unbending shall I be found on that score. You have lived long enough at Rome and in my States to know that our revenues and the tolls levied by the Church in Christian lands could not be diminished without involving drawbacks with which I am pledged to avoid burdening the Church. This, then, is how the matter stands. I am prepared to remain conciliatory on all points, provided that the needs of the Apostolic Chamber are satisfied. Good-bye, Herr von Maltitz.

VON MALTITZ: I crave your Holiness' blessing.

Kneels and kisses the pontifical slipper.

LEO X. (raising his right hand, makes the sign of the Cross over him): *Benedico te in nomine.** . . . I will send you some excellent Sicilian wine for your dinners on your journey. Good-bye, von Maltitz. Cardinal Bibbiena, you will come this evening to our little concert? And you, Bembo, shall we not hunt to-day?

BEMBO: I long to, Most Holy Father.

LEO X.: Follow me then, Nimrod, I hear the battue is excellent; let us lose no time.

They go out.

BIBBIENA: My dear von Maltitz, you understand that we do not mind whether the money comes by way of indulgences or otherwise; but remember that in any case we want money and nothing but money, and you must not imagine that we will give up a single doit of that money.

* I bless thee in the Name. . . .—Tr.

VON MALTITZ: I am somewhat embarrassed, for I fear that the Elector is, like you, more stubborn on that point than on any other.

BIBBIENA: In that case, so much the worse. Tell Frederick the Wise not to chafe our hunger; we shall turn into tigers.

VON MALTITZ: My eloquence will do its best. Good-bye, most reverend Signors; I must finish my preparations so as to start to-morrow morning. I kiss your hands, and commend myself to your good graces.

Exit

SADOLETO: Suppose he were to fail in his mission?

BIBBIENA: He will hardly succeed. For the rest, the ground is cracking beneath our feet.

SADOLETO: And, nevertheless, we are working to raise our edifice to the skies.

BIBBIENA: It is the foundations that are being sapped.

SADOLETO: We strengthen them as best we can with blocks of silver, great blocks of silver, and every day the need for this material grows more pressing.

BIBBIENA: And every day it becomes more difficult to obtain. We use every possible means. The taxes are rising, rising, rising! Burghers and peasants growl and threaten. They are reduced to beggary, and trade is being crushed and killed. The privileges of the cities are assailed, and through the crevices that we make we put all the fingers of both hands to grasp the little that is there. We sell offices, we sell livings, we sell bishoprics, we sell patriarchates, we sell the cardinal's hat; every day we invent some ecclesiastical ware for sale. What is there that we do not sell? We rather light-heartedly made away with Cardinal Petrucci, at the time of the war with Urbino and on account of the conspiracy of Batista Vercelli, and if the Cardinals Sauli and Riario have escaped, you know what their safety costs them!

SADOLETO: Yes, them and many others; money has been coined on the back of the Sacred College by means of these dismal tricks.

BIBBIENA: You are right. You remember the thirty-four promotions that were made after that affair, on the pretext of securing faithful servants? The profit of this financial operation was considerable, but the public conscience can never yet have borne so heavy a burden. If we now turn to consider our foreign policy, it is precisely the same. Grist comes to our mill from annates, Peter's pence, mutations, and these famous indulgences, the cause of the present trouble. In spite of so many toils, so many preoccupations—let us be candid, so much plundering—nothing is enough for us, we do not manage to fill the void, and every day that passes drives us deeper into an abyss of poverty. We must perforce cry piteously for help; our penury tortures and crushes us; we know less and less how to get out of it, and—be assured! we shall end by drawing down upon us a violent protest from outraged Christendom; we shall be deafened by a universal *tolle*!* the governments, big and little, will make us hear this last decree: "You have impoverished us enough, you shall have no more!"

SADOLETO: Dear friend, I fully anticipate it. Men are already asking what right we can allege for consuming the world's substance.

BIBBIENA: Some good arguments can be put forward in our favour. The Church represents intelligence; the treasures that we absorb serve to foster and strengthen science, art, and other branches of civilisation.

SADOLETO: They serve likewise—let us admit—to glorify and to fatten indolence, vice, and perversity.

BIBBIENA: I admit it; but every cloth has its seamy side. Every cultivated society is a corrupt society. Must we on that account return to barbarism? Barbarism, perhaps, is unmoved by the mercenary allurements of beautiful courtesans; but it disembowels prisoners of war, and smears with blood the hideous faces of its idols. . . . Pardon me if I

* Remove them!—Tr.

break short our conversation here. I have an appointment at my house with our dear Raphael; I have something to lecture him about. If you have no pressing business, come with me and add your preaching to mine. What say you?

SADOLETO: With pleasure, my friend; let us go.

Bibbiena and Sadoleto walk majestically out of the room and cross the galleries and Papal apartments; the crowd of servants and soldiers of the Holy Palace opens before them and salutes them respectfully. At the foot of the staircase they find their own officers, secretaries, train-bearers, chamberlains, gentlemen and servants of all grades. Two caparisoned mules are brought forward and the two dignitaries are helped to mount. They enter the streets of Rome; the escort opens a way for them in the midst of the multitude, which opens and closes again. From time to time one or the other of the two princes of the Church raises his hand and gives the blessing to monks, women, merchants, and poorer folk, who kneel at sight of them.

BIBBIENA: What a motley assemblage of faces and costumes!

SADOLETO: I never weary of the sight. It would stir the idlest imagination. We see here samples of all the nations of the earth.

BIBBIENA: What a haughty mien those Spaniards have! They are the dominant race of our age; and since they have discovered the New Indies, there are no limits to their pride or their rapacity. The lowest among them fancies himself a little king!

SADOLETO: And there, in the corner, those three Portuguese! From the expression on their faces, one can see that the conquerors of Goa and Diu are no whit behind their neighbours of the Guadiana in arrogance and presumption. But look also at those Frenchmen, their noses in the air, trailing their swords, jesting, and highly pleased with themselves!

BIBBIENA: And there, there! those honest Swiss, half drunk, jostling the Germans!

SADOLETO: Let me in turn point out to you those two Englishmen, cold as statues; they are stopping to stare con-

temptuously at a group of Syrians and Greeks. Fortunately, here is Signor Pompeo Frangipani with his men-at-arms; he pushes the islanders and drives them away. They would not have moved all day. . . . Do you know what thoughts occur to me?

BIBBIENA: My thoughts are worlds! My head is awhirl, especially when I look at these long lines of superb palaces, these churches, these three-storied towers, these glorious columns freed by the hand of time from their ruined architraves —all seeming still to proclaim the memories of an inimitable antiquity. What a frame for so living a picture!

SADOLETO: I ask myself how many years more all these people, of origins so various, will remain attached to the great Mother City, which seems to render them no other service than to take from them what they earn.

BIBBIENA: I fear that from now the years will be but months.

SADOLETO: Heavens! you are too gloomy a prophet. Can we really be certain that these nations ever consider what is useful and what harmful? For a long time the Holy Church has been living on their substance; and custom is a strange yoke. It is enough if a thing exists, for most men to conclude therefrom that it must exist. Besides, as regards religion, what is it that the mob desires? Purity? Truth? . . . It has no idea of these. Neither its senses nor its heart feel the slightest need of such things. It requires conventional words, and always much the same medley of more or less foolish superstitions which we have preserved from paganism, and which paganism itself inherited from earlier days. That is what is called religion for the populace, and its thirst for such religion will never be slaked. The real danger lies in some few ideas that continually arise afresh, ideas that are the luxury of a minority—and a minority takes a long time to make a breach in the general folly.

BIBBIENA: Then, I beg you, give your blessing to that old

dame on her knees who is presenting to you her two children.
SADOLETO: Certainly . . . she has a most respectable face. . . . Give her a ducat. . . . I proceed. The men of learning do us a deal of damage with their excessive passion for the past.
BIBBIENA: You are right; nevertheless, one must admit that the Fathers' style is pitiable, and as for that of the Decretals, frankly, it fills me with shame.
SADOLETO: I do not deny it; but observe that by this we live. Our property is being spoiled and depreciated. . . . We depreciate it ourselves, you, Bembo, I . . . and the Pope more than any of us. He never is at a loss for a jest, good or ill-humoured, against the monks. All men of wit and taste do the same. I do not say that we are wrong. But how are we to uphold an institution when we declare from morning till night that we do not believe in its sanctity?
BIBBIENA: Do you know of a remedy?
SADOLETO: There are diseases that come from temperament. The temperament of the Church is to live by abuses. So many reforms would be needed, and so far-reaching! I can imagine myself a reformer, consenting to become a carpet-maker like St. Paul, to sup on a raw onion in a dirty tavern!
BIBBIENA (smiling): You make me shudder.
SADOLETO: Consider what Leo X. and each of our reverend colleagues would answer to a proposal that they should do likewise! Their indignation would, moreover, be shared by all the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and monks of Christendom, as also by the princes, who would suspect me of hypocrisy, fanaticism and demagogy, and perhaps they would not be wrong. Yet I am far from denying that from time to time an attempt at asceticism has its advantages. It is no bad thing that some arch-madman or other, looking for spiritual adventures in the recesses of his cell, should diet himself on bread and water and scourge himself as hard as he can. Not only do such frenzies delight the masses by maintaining the tradition of the anchorites of the

Thebaid, successors of the worthy Corybantes and all the devotees of Isis who have enjoyed lashing themselves ever since the world was created; but they serve later on as a pretext for building fine churches in porphyry or marble, at the invocation of the holy man, and for executing in his honour admirable paintings, statues of marvellous beauty, and finally for creating wealthy livings for ecclesiastics who have nothing in common with their saint. But of other results I can see none.

BIBBIENA: Heavens, how mad men are! Live and let live, is there anything better or easier? When the world is so beautiful, when charming objects abound everywhere, when men can make such pleasant and easy use of their time, their minds and their hearts!

SADOLETO: And, failing all else, is not curiosity alone enough to make life sweet? What can be more interesting than to watch the course of affairs? For instance, the wisdom of the Venetians is highly instructive, while the fickleness of the Florentines is full of amusing surprises! And here are the French, adopting the love of arts like ourselves, and the new Germanic Cæsar, Charles V., that young man of whom we yet know nothing, how curious to observe his first steps! . . . Why all these shouts? . . . What an uproar! . . . What are you doing, Ambrosio? Why do you arrest this man?

OFFICER: Reverend Monsignor, he is a thief! The constables are chasing him, and he is trying to escape. . . . We have him!

SADOLETO: Let him go, poor thief! . . . Go, my son, go, run off and try to mend your ways. . . . I was saying. . . . But here we are at your door, and there is Master Raphael. Let us stop.

RAPHAEL (followed by some pupils and servants, approaches and hails the two Cardinals): Most reverend Excellencies, I kiss your feet!

BIBBIENA: Greeting—I am delighted to see you.
SADOLETO: Greeting, dear master, give me your hand.

The Cardinals dismount, enter the palace, exchange greetings; Raphael follows them; the three, conversing together, go up the great staircase. Their suite stops in an enormous gallery; they continue and enter a room decorated with pictures and gildings, with immense door-curtains of Levantine stuffs.

BIBBIENA: Take a seat, friend, in this armchair. Sit down, Raphael, my son; sit on this stool; you come here to be lectured.
RAPHAEL (smiling): I suspected as much from the wording of your letter. . . . Is it because of my conversation of yesterday with two of your most reverend colleagues?
BIBBIENA: What did you tell them?
RAPHAEL: They were before my picture of the Apostles and declared that St. Peter and St. Paul were too red. I answered that they could not be otherwise, when they saw the Church administered as it is. I assure you these two Signors went off without asking for more.
BIBBIENA (to Sadoleto): You hear? It is the commentary to our conversation. Now, Raphael, we must come to other matters . . . to your interests, my son! Cardinal Sadoleto wishes you well, as I do, and we may talk openly before him.
RAPHAEL: Both of you are showering benefits upon me. I should be the most ungrateful of men if I did not recognise that.
BIBBIENA: Since the death of your betrothed, my poor niece, my dear Maria, I can think of no plan for your settling down. Have you not yourself some scheme to this end? It is time to consider it. You will not always be young, and you have just reached the age of thirty-seven. As for me, I am growing old. I should like to see your future assured and your life unfold itself before you, stable, serene, and calm as it should be, for you to produce freely the masterpieces which we have a right to demand of you, since you are a being unparalleled on this earth.

SADOLETO: You and Michael Angelo may be called, as Horace called the Dioscuri, *Lucida sidera.**

RAPHAEL: I mourned the untimely death of my betrothed, Maria da Bibbiena. I mourn her, poor girl, for her own qualities and also because, being so near akin to you, she would have come to me from you as a bride. Yet I have not concealed from you this—that I never thought of marriage with confidence. It is a blessing that does not attract me. I love freedom. I love to see before my eyes a distance without boundaries; I love life—and, to unveil the depths of my heart to you, I love to idolatry the memory of another whom I have lost and who alone could have made me change my opinion.

BIBBIENA: Do not speak of your poor Beatrice . . . do not speak of her. . . . This memory tortures you.

RAPHAEL: If it tortures me, it dignifies me, too. That adored being has taught me what disinterestedness and goodness the noblest affection can attain; from the bosom of death, she still sends me that feeling of heavenly melancholy, a well undefiled that without her I should never have known. Her memory wraps me in a veil of crape whose folds are never heavy and which I should never wish to cast off. The love that joined us burns in me like a lamp lighted from the torches of immortality. To please you, I consented to an alliance which, as you well know, was not made by my desire. . . . Heaven did not permit it. . . . Let us talk no more of such a project.

BIBBIENA: So you intend to remain in the flighty independence of youth? I respect your motives, but it is no less true that you consent to remain the man of the unexpected, of adventure, and never to know that maturity of life which alone leads to that public esteem with which genius itself cannot dispense.

* Shining stars.—Tr.

RAPHAEL: What a lofty tone you are adopting, most reverend signor! and I notice from Monsignor Sadoleto's look that he shares your views.

SADOLETO: Art, my son, is one of God's great creations and quite equal, in my opinion, to literature, in dignity and in power. Nevertheless, a settled and well-balanced life brings to its possessor the consolations necessary for the miseries of existence.

RAPHAEL: It seems to me that this end can be gained without its being needful to take a wife. Disturbance of customs and habits is an abomination to me; it is a source of sterility for the artist, and the worst form of bondage. But the means of escaping it are no more lacking to me than the desire. I am certainly the wealthiest of artists, and in spite of the rather expensive style that I keep up, which appears to me necessary for the satisfaction of my tastes and the freedom of my spirit, I never cease to pay suitable attention to this phase of my interests. At this moment, in the City of Rome, I own an estate of two thousand ducats, which brings me in an income of fifty gold crowns. The supervision of the work on St. Peter's has been entrusted to me by the Pope since the death of Il Bramante; it affords me an annual salary of three hundred ducats, and I am on the road to obtaining other orders of the same kind shortly. His Holiness, in commanding me to paint a new room in the Vatican, has allotted me twelve hundred ducats for this purpose. A few days ago I was appointed inspector of ancient monuments, an office which assures me large profits, and on all sides I am asked for pictures, and can name my own price. In such a position, I surround myself at will with loyal and attentive servants, I lead an unrivalled existence, and I have no need to instal in my house a wife and family—bringing more annoyance than pleasure. Enough of this; you would do well to come and visit the work at St. Peter's with me, and then we will go and take sherbet in my vineyard.

SADOLETO: He argues passably well, what say you?

Indeed, he is a priest like you, though serving a profane godhead, and what I appreciate most in my ecclesiastical duties is the happiness of the celibate's unhappiness.

BIBBIENA: Good; I will talk no more of all this. But, Raphael, I should like to see you take more care of your health. You have too much work and too much amusement. I am anxious when I hear of your attacks of fever; they alarm me greatly, you are wearing yourself out too quickly.

RAPHAEL: I never felt so strong or free in my limbs. I have just been present at the excavations of the Campo Vaccino. I stayed three or four hours in the trenches. What a delightful morning it has been! Now let us go to St. Peter's.

BIBBIENA: Well, let us go! It is at least two days since I saw you last, my dear son, and the time has passed slowly.

SADOLETO: Let us make up for it! I will read you, this evening, when we are well rested, the delicious elegy addressed to the Pope by our friend, Guidus Posthumus Sylvester. It is one of the most striking Latin poems I have ever read:

Heu! quam nostra levis, quam non diuturna voluntas
Quam iuvat ingratum sæpe quod ante fuit!*

and the rest in the same style. It is admirable!

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* Alas! how fickle is our will, how little lasting, how often that which we loathed before delights us!—Tr.

MICHAEL ANGELO'S STUDIO.

A cold and dark retreat. The night is black. A statue, still almost in the rough, on which falls the light of a little copper lamp, held by Antonio Urbino, the artist's servant. Michael Angelo is occupied in finishing a sort of cardboard helmet with open peak, arranged so as to serve as a receptacle.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You see, Urbino? You said I should not succeed! I have succeeded perfectly. Now, give me the lamp.

URBINO: It will not keep upright in that! It will fall and burn your hair. A fine idea of yours!

MICHAEL ANGELO: I tell you it will keep upright! Why do you refuse to admit that?

URBINO: It is not I that refuse to admit it, but the lamp that will refuse to keep upright.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Come, you obstinate creature! give me your lamp, and roll this wire firmly round the base . . . one more turn. . . . Good! Now, I put the lamp inside. . . . I fasten the wire here. . . . You see? . . . It will stay.

URBINO: When you move about with that on your head you will set fire to the cardboard.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Not at all! The aperture is wide, and the flame has all the room it needs to waver from left to right. It's splendid! I shall now be able to work at night, with lighting effects on the marble which will give the finest results.

URBINO: It would be far better if you went to bed. You always have ideas that occur to no one else.

MICHAEL ANGELO: It is quite convenient to carry. My head is perfectly at ease. Pass me the hammer and the flat chisel . . . here . . . on the wooden box.

URBINO: I tell you that you would do far better if you went to bed instead of working like a wretched hireling. You know quite well that Her Excellency the Marchioness does not wish you to over-exert yourself.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Very well, you will go to-morrow to

ask after her health, and you will tell her that it is my wife who will not let me go to bed.

URBINO: Your wife? Your wife? What does that mean?

MICHAEL ANGELO: She is here, at my side, looking at me with her beautiful great eyes; she pushes my arm and says to me: "Work, Michael Angelo, work for your glory and mine!" and she shows me a bit of green leaf that she has in her hand—a laurel.

URBINO: These phrases of yours will not prevent you from tiring yourself to death.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I have not been so happy for many a long day. It is a black night, and by the gleam of this little lamp I see a world of ideas. . . . What may the time be?

URBINO: I think it cannot be far from midnight. You had better go to bed.

MICHAEL ANGELO: It is pouring with rain. One can hear the shower smiting the roofs and falling on the flagstones of the courtyard like a great river. It has been a fearful storm. Lightnings furrow the shimmering blackness of the windowpane. But behind all this stern uproar, what calm! The distant rumblings of the thunder and its majestic roarings, but no human voice, no false, lying, peevish, imperious or stupidly arrogant voice is raised to vex me! I can create . . . my spirit is free . . . I am happy! . . . I am wholly in the power of all that is worth my entire devotion, and the hard bosom of the marble opens . . . the living head begins to appear. . . . White, white, it palpitates beneath the chisel that sets free its features one by one. . . . Out of the material they spring . . . they speak. . . . Urbino!

URBINO: Master?

MICHAEL ANGELO: You are falling asleep on your footstool. It is you who would do well to go and seek your bed.

URBINO: I cannot. When you sleep, I will sleep—not before.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Strange obstinacy!

URBINO: True, I am no longer young, and it wearies me

to stay up, but the Marchioness said to me: "When your master does not go to rest, do not go to rest either, and we shall see if he cares to tax the strength of his old servant."

MICHAEL ANGELO: Give me a few minutes more; there is one thing to be finished.

URBINO: A few minutes, but not more. The Marchioness expressly desires. . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO: Very well then! . . . Tell me a story to keep me awake.

URBINO: I went to-day to your notary.

MICHAEL ANGELO: We won't speak of that.

URBINO: He says that the two girls whom you have dowered are quite respectable.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I am glad, Urbino. I wish them all happiness; they are lovable children, though very ugly.

URBINO: I also saw your nephew. He came while you were out.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Good. . . . If he should happen to come back, tell him to leave me in peace and go about his business.

URBINO: He thinks, and that rightly, that his most pressing business is to thank you for the three thousand crowns which you, who are not rich, have given him.

MICHAEL ANGELO: He knows that I love him; he has no need to thank me.

URBINO: Master, the clock strikes . . . an hour after midnight. . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO: I have finished . . . but I am mortally hungry. Have you nothing to eat here? Look in the meal-tub.

URBINO: I will go and see. . . . Ah! your house is kept on a poor footing indeed! As soon as you have money, it is given to the first comer.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Man needs but little for his body. But all his strength is insufficient to elevate his soul.

URBINO: Here's some bread . . . . a trifle hard . . . . and a piece of cheese, and even the end of a bottle. . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO: Excellent! Bring me all that.

Takes off his cardboard cap, puts the lamp on a bench and eats, standing up, looking at his statue. Loud knocking at the door.

Who can be coming at this hour? Look through the grill.

URBINO: Who is knocking?

A VOICE: It is I, Antonio Mini. . . . Open, master! . . . It is I, your pupil! I have important news for you!

MICHAEL ANGELO: My pupil, Antonio Mini? Open! Is it bad tidings?

ANTONIO MINI (entering): Oh, Master, a terrible misfortune!

MICHAEL ANGELO: What is the matter? You are quite pale!

MINI: Raphael is dying! No doubt he is dead by now.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Raphael! God in heaven!

MINI: I was in his studio with two of his pupils, Timoteo Viti and Il Garofalo. It was about three o'clock. A servant came to say that the master was ill. He had had fever since yesterday evening.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Since yesterday? I am not surprised. He was a man of delicate complexion, half woman, half child. He spent too much time at work and far too much at his pleasures. I met him, four days ago, making excavations in the Campo Vaccino, and I even remember warning him to beware of digging at this season of the year. You say he is worse?

NINI: If he is not dead now, he will not last out till daybreak. He had himself carried into his studio, and I saw him, yes, I saw him, white as a shroud, half-fainting, his eyes fixed on his picture of the Transfiguration. . . . Near the bed, which had been set up for him in a hurry, stood his friends, Cardinals Bibbiena, Sadoleto and Bembo, and other Signors whom I do not know. . . . At the pillow-side was the Holy Father, crying and wiping his eyes.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Urbino, give me my cap and cloak. I must go there! Raphael . . . Raphael . . . dying! My God, is it possible? . . . Quick, let us go!

URBINO: Here, here, master! Give me time to light a lantern; I will light your way.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You say there is no help for it? Are you certain? Have the physicians been sent for? What did they say? What did they do? Let us go!

MINI: There was no lack of physicians; there was the Holy Father's, Messer Jacopo of Brescia, then Messer Gaëtano Marini, and others. All looked very gloomy and shook their heads; their eyes told us that their science could do no more.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Come, Urbino, are you ready?

URBINO: Here I am, master!

MICHAEL ANGELO: Walk in front, quickly!

They go out into the street, which is very dark; however, the rain has ceased falling; the clouds, rapidly rolled upon one another by the wind, are torn asunder and show a part of the orb of the moon, which gives a faint light to the houses and the road. A great noise of footsteps is heard.

What is this uproar?

URBINO: We shall know after turning the corner of the lane!

MINI: Forward! Mind that puddle of water, master!

He supports Michael Angelo by the arm.

Rapidly and confusedly, there passes a numerous company of officers, soldiers, servants and torch-bearers, whose torches throw a red light on the houses; in the midst of this procession, the pontifical litter with curtains drawn.

MICHAEL ANGELO (to a chamberlain): What means this, Sir?

CHAMBERLAIN: It is the Holy Father returning to the Vatican.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Is Raphael . . .?

A VOICE: Raphael is dead, and Michael Angelo alone remains in Italy!

The procession passes; Michael Angelo drops on to a stone bench. The clouds have parted, and the moon shines in a clear sky.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I remain, it is true . . . I alone

remain. Last year it was Lionardo . . . now it is Raphael, and all whom we three knew or listened to have long since gone. It is true, I alone remain. There was a time when I should have loved to be the only one, the peerless, the unique, the greatest confidant of the secrets of creative heaven! I imagined that to resemble the sun, in the centre of the universe, without an equal, without a rival, was the most enviable form of happiness. . . . For years I was not fond of Lionardo. . . . I railed at Raphael in the bottom of my heart. . . . I repeated to myself, so as to convince myself, that I rated them low. . . . Yes, there have been days when you, Michael Angelo, were only a poor creature, of short sight and circumscribed vision, apt to censure and misunderstand all that did not resemble you, and—I tell you, because it is true—all that was quite as good as you and perhaps better! Now I have what my heart desired. The stars have gone out in heaven, and here I am alone . . . quite alone . . . and stifled in my isolation! . . . There is still Titian; he is a great genius, a great brain. . . . There is Andrea del Sarto. . . . There is . . . But, alas! no—great as they are, they are not the peers of Lionardo and of him who lies down there. . . . Ah, Raphael! . . . His beauty, his subtlety, his sweetness, his grace, and, in his talk as in his aspect, what divine honey! . . . all that I have not, all that I cannot reach . . . all that I am not! . . . He whom all loved and who deserved so well to be loved! . . . My God, my God, what is it that comes over me? What is stirring within me and drawing tears from eyes that never tried to weep? Of what am I thinking? Yes, a river of grief is rising and rolling within my bosom; the tears escape from my eyelids, stream down my cheeks, fall upon him whom I always abused and shunned, and who was so much better and more loved of Heaven than I! She told me so, she . . . Vittoria . . . she always told me so, and I would not agree. . . . But I know it well, at bottom, I felt it, and now

that the thunderbolt of death has passed between him and me, now that I remain here, my feet in the mud of the world, while his noble and charming countenance appears to me in the bosom of God, shining with celestial light, I see how insincere and petty I have been! No . . . no, Titian and the others, however admirable they may be, are not the equals of these two great departed. About them, and about me who remain, the light is waning and receding, the shadows are lengthening. . . . Yes, here I am alone, and the icy breath of the tomb that is opening strikes my face. What will become of the arts? And we, who have hoped so much, desired so much, imagined so much, worked so much, what have we achieved, what shall we bequeath to them that come after us? Not a quarter of what we should have done.

Covers his face with his hands.

URBINO: Come, Master, you will take cold.

MINI: Give me your arm, and let us go back to your house.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Yes; we must preserve our strength and work as long as we are throttled by the chain of life.

THE PIAZZA NAVONE.

A French gentleman, an English gentleman, a Flemish Franciscan, a cicerone.

CICERONE: When I saw you from a distance, I at once said to myself, most excellent Signors, "Here are most important personages, to whom your duty compels you immediately to make obeisance and offer your services."

FRENCHMAN: I am from Champagne, and my estate of Brandicourt is well known. My friend comes from London, and we have hired the services of this good Father at joint expense; he waits on us, brushes our clothes, and takes notes of the observations we make in our travels.

CICERONE: I am most happy to have the honour of meeting your illustrious Excellencies. I am a person of some note in this city, and indeed I can well say that I owe this far less to my poor deserts than to the loftiness of my birth and to the credit which my kinsfolk enjoy at the Holy Father's court. I am glad to place at your disposal all that I can; I will show you Rome in all its most precious details, and will expound its charms to you from point to point.

ENGLISHMAN: That will be very pleasant; but perhaps you will expect us to pay you heavily?

CICERONE: Magnificent Signors, you shall give me whatever you think fit. In any case, be assured that I shall feel overwhelmed by your kindness. I only want the honour of doing you service.

THE ENGLISHMAN: I wish to know everything!

THE CICERONE: Nothing is easier.

THE FRENCHMAN: You understand: my friend and I came to Italy with the sole object of saying afterwards, in fine company, "I have seen this and that!" So it would be very annoying to learn too late that there was something or other we had not seen.

THE CICERONE: Have no fear. We will begin at this very moment, if you please. Let us take this road. In passing, I shall bid you admire the Campo Vaccino; it is the place where the ancient Romans held their assemblies.

ENGLISHMAN: I wish to see it at once!
CICERONE: You shall see it at once! There the famous Pompey was murdered.
FRENCHMAN: Father Jean, write that in your note-book.
Father Jean writes.
CICERONE: Next, we shall go and visit the Vatican, where one of my cousins, who stands high in the Holy Father's confidence, will take us round for a trifle.
THE FRENCHMAN: I wish to see the pictures of that painter who died the other day and was given so splendid a funeral. . . . What was his name?
CICERONE: You mean Master Raphael.
FRENCHMAN: They say he was quite a . . . quite a . . . clever man. I am told that the King himself gave him a commission.
ENGLISHMAN: Ah, yes, that's a man I should have been glad to have seen. . . . But, after all, since he's dead . . . When we have visited the Vatican, let us go and dine in the tavern where they feed you best.
CICERONE: Most illustrious Signors, that is my very intention, and I will have a meal served you that will astonish you.
ENGLISHMAN: Father Jean, you will take a note of the dishes and the way they are prepared.
FRENCHMAN: Could you not also introduce us to some charming ladies?
CICERONE: I have thought of that! I know two, at this moment, to whom I will take you this evening, and you will be delighted with them. We will sup at their house; we will have an instrumental concert, and you will thank me all your lives for the society to which you will be admitted; for I must ask you to bear in mind that they are ladies of high standing, allied to the most eminent families in Rome. As they are very fond of foreign Signors, I now and then give myself the pleasure of introducing some to them.
ENGLISHMAN: Father Jean, you will set down these ladies'

names in writing, so that we may mention them when we return home.

CICERONE: Let us set out, if you please, for I see there, to the left and right, two horsemen about to come and offer themselves to you as guides, and I would not have you fall into such evil hands.

FRENCHMAN: The deuce! A fine palace! Whose is it?

CICERONE: It belongs to the Ammirato.

FRENCHMAN (to the monk): Father Jean, write down that we have seen a palace of Amurath. . . . That is the great Turkish Sultan, is it not?

CICERONE: Exactly, magnificent Signor! They pass.

FERRARA.

Madam Lucrezia's study in the Ducal palace.—Madam Lucrezia is seated by an open window which looks on to an inner courtyard. She is dressed in a simple gown of black taffeta, and her sleeves and collar are of muslin with very little embroidery. Her black hair, carefully arranged under her velvet coif, shows some grey and white threads. Her face is grave and calm. Madam Lucrezia reads attentively a little book bound in yellow morocco; on its back is traced the title—*De Imitatione Christi.*—After a few minutes she places the open book on the window-sill, walks to a big table, sits down and draws towards her a sheet of paper, and, dipping her pen in the ink, writes the following words:

To His Most Reverend Excellency, Monsignor the Cardinal Bembo, Rome.

In using the Latin language, most revered and beloved Signor, I am not, you may be sure, yielding to an empty desire to make parade of my humble knowledge before your eyes. Still less must you think that I would dare to vie in eloquence with the superior genius of one who has revived among us the beautiful style, the noble language, of him who wrote "Of Old Age" and "Of Duties." Once upon a time, I was perhaps the slave of ideas so absurd; to-day, I use Latin for the twofold reason—that it is a dignified language, suitable to our years, and that it is dear to you, before whom I always wish to appear in such a light as to receive a warm welcome.

If I did not immediately answer your letter of the Ides of September last, it is because I have had troubles with which I did not wish to darken your loyal devotion. My Lord the Duke has been ill, so ill as to cause me keen anxiety. He is no longer young, and the accumulation of military hardships and administrative cares is beginning to tell cruelly upon his whole frame. I have spent sad days by his bed of sickness; now he is better, and I return to you somewhat consoled, with firmer courage, but

certainly not cured. My life has been too long. Too many regrets, too many vexations at much that is past burden my heart. The love of literature, that once had such power to delight my leisure hours, has lost its spell; religion alone keeps me up; it offers many threats as well as promises.

These are not emotions that one loves to communicate to a friend so dear as your most reverend Excellency. You have your troubles, you have your anxieties; I would gladly afford you consolation. Can I do so by wearying you with my own grievances? I think not, and for this reason I write to you seldom; but as I am well assured that I am ever present in your memory, you must also believe that the recollection of you flits ceaselessly about every corner of my heart.

Think of that, and think of it above all at the moments when you can associate me with the service of God. God alone supports me, in God alone is my hope and my desire; I am amazed that I can ever have looked in any other direction. I tremble before the judgments of Him, Whose rigour I have doubtless only too well deserved. But you have taught me to hope also in His pity, and it seems to me sometimes that my faults, in making me more submissive to the effects of His goodness, serve at least to redouble the ardour of my love for Him.

Farewell, my friend. Do not fail to thank His Holiness for the affectionate words with which he was recently pleased to honour his servant, and once more, pray for her whose need of prayer is so great.

Given at Ferrara, two days before the Kalends of January.

LUCRETIA BORGIA,

Duchess of Ferrara.

BRUGES.

A panelled chamber in carved oak. On the frieze, the arms of the Belgian provinces, painted and gilded; above the great chimneypiece, the blazon of the Empire; against the wall, opposite the stained-glass window, a great painting of the German School representing the Last Judgment. On a table, a lighted lamp, open dispatches.—Charles V., in an arm-chair before the table, writing.

A PAGE (entering): The very reverend Cardinal of Utrecht is at your Imperial Majesty's orders.

CHARLES V.: Let him come in.

ADRIAN: Cæsar has sent for me?

CHARLES V.: News has reached me of the sudden death of Leo X. I wish to discuss it with you.

ADRIAN: Leo X. dead? That was unexpected. He was only forty-six. Have you heard the details?

CHARLES V.: My Ambassadors write me that the Pope choked with joy at learning of the capture of Milan and the rout of the French by his troops. But here is a secret report from the master of the Holy Palace, Paris de Grassis, which gives me grounds for believing that he was poisoned.

ADRIAN: Who can have murdered the Pope, and why?

CHARLES V.: Did he not have Petrucci put to death and confiscate many persons' property? However that may be, Leo X. is dead. Be seated.

Adrian takes a seat near the table.

What do you think of this event?

ADRIAN: Christendom is in a sad plight. The French are beaten; but they will renew the conflict.

CHARLES V.: You are right. Francis I. will not be content to live in peace. His is a turbulent nature; he has many formidable defects and qualities. He wanted the Imperial crown. I gained it. He wants Burgundy, he wants Flanders; all that he wants he would have to wrest from *me*, and with God's aid I will prevent it.

ADRIAN: These are serious questions, but I confess to you, Sire, that at this moment, when I cast my mind's eye on the

now empty See of St. Peter, I am troubled for still more serious reasons. Never was religion in so great a peril. For years it has been travelling towards a precipice—now it is on the brink.

CHARLES V.: It is on the brink, and the precipice is bottomless. You are right in saying that this peril is more intense and more formidable than the others, for the whole world, the whole universe, depends on this power, Religion, which is charged with the mastery of heaven and earth; and if this power totters, all must crumble away beyond hope of redemption. I will not let the edifice crumble.

ADRIAN: You have already done great things in the handling of religious questions in Germany.

CHARLES V.: The dangers from this source are tremendous, and if I had not sharply stopped the chariot which the impetuous horses were whirling along, the evil would be already past all remedy. I will not tolerate heresy! I will not compromise with the worst of rebels, I will not allow a moment's rest or breathing-space to the supporters of these scandalous, poisonous, unpardonable outbreaks! What! The faith of Christ is menaced, and who defends it? I—Cæsar! As for the Vicar of the Apostles, he finds (I am wrong . . . happily wrong. . . he found, I mean) that Luther writes well; he amused himself with his letters, he spoke only of gentleness and patience regarding that firebrand! . . . I am there! . . . Without me, Hell would triumph!

ADRIAN: God has raised you up to be a Gideon.

CHARLES V.: It is strange that neither the Pope nor Francis I. understood where these innovations are leading us. Yet one has only to observe the eagerness of the petty princes to adopt them and of private persons to go mad over them. These damnable doctrines exhale the poison of independence and anarchy. They would support the Electors against me, the vassals against their suzerains, the swarming mob against the burgesses of the towns. The Pope imagined that from

EMPEROR CHARLES V.

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leaving everyone the right of frothing at his will, no more harm would result than from letting peasants get drunk on Sunday night. But there comes a moment when the drunkard is ill enough to fall into a delirium, and I see clearly that it is time to throttle licence. . . . The world is being filled with the insolent pamphlets of an Ulrich von Hutten, not to mention the rest. Are you of my opinion?

ADRIAN: Most certainly. Two vices, going hand in hand, are fomenting disorder, the mortal foe of religion and, in consequence, of the world: ecclesiastical perversity and impious tolerance, the sister of loose morals.

CHARLES V.: So you share my view that the next Pope would have to break with the worldly habits of previous reigns?

ADRIAN: If he hesitates, we are lost! He will have to be a Pope, not a prince; a theologian, not a man of letters; an ascetic, not a voluptuary. Let him live on mouldy bread and coarse herbs, and not on elaborate dishes served on platters of gold; I would see him use only wooden porringers! With his beggar's staff he must break the idols of ancient paganism, with which the Holy Palaces are crammed, to the dire scandal of consciences, and, so far from listening with delight to the rounded phrases of the Bembos and the Vidas, he must pack off all that crew to the prisons of the Holy Office and make them taste there the bitterest penitence. Yes, Cæsar; penitence, penitence, that alone can save the world! I mean, save it in this mortal life from the awful convulsions caused by licence, and save it in the immortal life from the avenging flames whose tortures we grow more and more to deserve!

CHARLES V.: An austere and saintly Pope, an Emperor resolved to share his labours and never to falter in the defence and glorification of the Faith, do you think that these two powers, well cemented together, could succeed in saving the world?

ADRIAN: There exists here below a sum-total of domination; it is never greater or smaller, but different periods,

different combinations within states distribute it in many different ways. What the Luthers and their supporters at this moment desire, what the insensate priests of the Papal court tolerate, is the minutest subdivision of this precious force; it is being frittered away in unworthy hands. But if the Pope and Cæsar were in agreement to unite in themselves the whole sovereign authority and to use it solely for the triumph of the Cross, what a sight that would be! What universal happiness!

CHARLES V.: I am the Cæsar, and you are the Pope!

ADRIAN: I do not hesitate to say that this would be a great misfortune for me, whose last years are in need of rest. But it would be a blessing for men's souls, for I should spare no effort in the work of salvation.

CHARLES V.: You have not understood me. Read these dispatches. The Conclave met immediately after the death of Leo X. I presented the truth before the Cardinals' eyes. They saw it. They elected you. The Holy Ghost has descended upon you. You are Pope, I tell you, as I am Emperor.

ADRIAN (joins his hands and keeps them clasped against his breast. His eyes are closed, and his lips murmur a prayer aloud. A moment's silence): I am myself again. What event could tax a feeble creature more? The hand of God is upon me; let the Holy Will be fulfilled. I do not know, my son, whether, in what has occurred, your worldly wisdom has not acted against the freedom of election. This is not the time to look into that. I did not wish or ask for the tiara. With you or in spite of you, God does what he does well. I am a poor man, of humble birth, hidden away hitherto in the squabbles of northern cities; I have never seen Italy, and I shall enter the Vatican like a ragged vagabond whose presence is deemed an insult to the splendour of a Royal palace. Well, I will insult that splendour! I will smite it hard! And if it so pleases the master who summons me, I will set up in its place

the humility and the Christian frugality whereof our need is so great!

CHARLES V.: Count on me, Holy Father, as on an obedient son. Together, we too are all-powerful for good; hence we must accomplish all to that end! The armies, the treasures, the intelligence, the thought of Cæsar shall work for you. . . . But I must also tell you, for at this moment, with your hand in mine, we have nothing to hide from each other: do not falter, do not draw back, do not fall! For, as for me, I will always march forward, and if the Church retreats or hesitates, I will drag it along in spite of all!

END OF THE FOURTH PART

FIFTH PART

MICHAEL ANGELO

BEFORE ROME.

1527.

The camp of the Imperial troops.—Three o'clock in the morning. Long lines of fires indicate the line of the bivouacs; the sentinels are afoot; the companies, the battalions are lying on the ground; the men are asleep. The silence is broken from time to time; a musket-fire is heard, or shouts. One tent alone is raised, that of the general, the Constable de Bourbon. A table of coarse wood bearing a tallow candle. The Constable standing in full armour, except his helmet; he walks about in great agitation. Don Fernando D'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, Spanish commander.

CONSTABLE: What am I, after all? . . . What am I for so great a crime, a deed such as future generations will not be able to understand, and less still to pardon! Taking Rome by storm! Taking Rome, dishonouring her, pillaging her, violating her! Rome! . . . Only the most savage of barbarians could have dared to do this! For them alone, heaven reserved this horror; and I, am I to begin it afresh? Yes, am I to couple my name with such infamy? I, the scion of the noblest stock that ever existed! I, the descendant of kings, of saints, of conquerors, of warriors, am I to emerge from this act dripping with blood and shame? . . . No, I am not what I describe to you, Marquis! . . . Don't believe a word of such fantastical stuff! . . . I! I am not the Constable de Bourbon at all; I am a man of straw, insulted in every possible way by Madame de Savoie, by M. de Bonnivet, by the favourites, by the humblest courtier, by the go-betweens, the harlots, and all the rabble that is honoured by the confidence of the King! I have been betrayed, cheated, flouted, robbed, banished; I wished to take my revenge, and with rage in my heart and a blush on my brow, my honour before me, I woke up one morning in the service of the Emperor. From that moment, under the name of chief or general, I have become less than the lackey of a politician who is mean, crooked, ferocious, ignoble —yes, ignoble! . . . I have fallen so low as to be the plaything of a soldiery dying of famine, which drives me before it to lead it where it will, throwing on me the responsibility

for its excesses, and behind this mob, Cæsar shouts to me: Forward! . . . Why don't you go forward?

MARQUIS: It is true, my Lord. A man so unhappy as you I have never known.

CONSTABLE: What could I do? How could I contrive to escape from the vice in which, for years past, I have felt myself caught! The most convenient way would have been to let myself slip into the arms of Madame de Savoie and live in her good graces. I should have been loaded with favours; they would have deigned. . . deigned! . . . to pay me for my trouble by granting me for so vile a career the patrimony of my race! King Francis would have forgiven my merits on the score of my baseness . . . with his creatures, I should have taken part in the spoliations, and have been congratulated. Honour willed it otherwise. . . . Can you imagine, Marquis, what a troublesome beast this Honour is? Contrary, disordered, quarrelsome, odious to any man of peaceful temper? I should have consented to retire, to stand aside, to live on my estate, to play the country squire, to extinguish, to stifle all the activity and desire for good that I felt within me. . . . In short, I was resigning myself to count in my family pedigree as nothing but one of those good idle lords, solely praiseworthy for not having allowed the race to die out. No! I made a mistake! Fly the court? Not salute, not burn incense, not say "Amen" to the perpetual mass chanted in honour of sacrosanct royalty? . . . I had the air of a malcontent! Could I be allowed to rest in peace? I was harassed, threatened, entrapped; I fled, and in accordance with the present law, I became all at once a monster; and the poor worthy man whom we saw die before our eyes, Marquis, that M. de Bayard, fortunate enough to have received from heaven the signal happiness of a simple and orderly existence, cursed me as he died. By my soul! I am seized by a temptation to curse in turn Heaven, the angels, and God, who have dragged me to a place where, of my own free will, I should never have been tempted to go!

MICHAELANGELVS BVONAROTVS NOBILIS
FLORENTINVS AN AET SVE LXXI
QVI SIM NOMEN HABES SATQ ESSE NAM CAETERA QVI NON
SVNT NOTA AVT MENTEM NON HABET AVT OCVLOS
M D XLV

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI

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MARQUIS: Your trials are hard, my Lord. But who can foretell the end?

CONSTABLE: I tell you, by the light of many years' experience, there is no such thing as justice! It is a hollow word, an odious mockery! There are only bloody necessities, the reason for which we cannot imagine; their source remains eternally hidden. What I see is that good and evil henceforth change their names, their habits and their parts. In our days there are no more princes, no more noblemen, in a word, no more men, for the titles of prince and nobleman only served in former times to denote those who were more of men than the rest. There are masters and flunkeys and dogs that are whipped, and when the flunkeys do not cringe, cringe humbly before their masters, they are thrashed like dogs! That is the state of things now and hereafter in the world! King Louis XI. invented the method; it will go on being perfected.

MARQUIS: Has Pope Clement subjected himself to the Emperor's will? Does he not see the danger? Nothing can save him but complete obedience!

CONSTABLE: The Pope has given no sign of life since yesterday. He must have been so terror-stricken that he no longer knows how to plan or to act, or rather he has recourse to the pitiful cunning of those insects which, when threatened, roll themselves up, draw their legs into their body and their head into their neck, and drop without movement, leaving the rest to chance.

MARQUIS: Chance will give him, mercilessly, the finishing stroke; the name of chance is Charles V., and it knows no forgiveness.

THE CONSTABLE: True, it knows no forgiveness. It will strike; but I am its knife; and Cæsar will not fail to say that he never intended to do so much harm. The knife will be thrown aside with well-feigned disgust. I shall be disavowed. I was so convinced of this that I wished to resign the command. That was foreseen, and you know whether I am free.

THE MARQUIS: Except our Spanish companies, few in

number, it is certain that your Italian or German troops consist of the most thoroughpaced scoundrels ever seen.

CONSTABLE: You have just arrived in camp, and you judge them from first sight. I did not know myself, before I had experience, what the Emperor was putting in my hands. It is a red-hot iron. The Lutheran adventurers, of whom they have succeeded in purging Germany, form the nucleus of my force. It is said that in days gone by the Popes Alexander and Julius II. enlisted Turks; they must have been lambs as compared with my heretics; for them, to insult or kill a priest is a labour of piety. I go about this unhappy Italy, answering for the deeds and feats of these wretches.

MARQUIS: Heaven has endowed Cæsar with a profound intellect; God knows who could succeed in fathoming the dark under-currents of the reasons that make him act.

CONSTABLE: I could not, as regards what does not concern me. But in my own business I see clearly. Nothing sharpens the wits so much as long oppression and misfortune. I feel, I guess, I foreshadow what is being done to crush me; I unravel the motives. Cæsar treats me as you misuse a horse that does not belong to you. On his Spanish, German, Flemish commanders he does not wish to impose the crushing burdens that break the back and soil the sides of a servant; but on my back he puts a burden of this sort—on me whom my evil star has given into his hands, and whose life and honour are to him a matter of complete indifference. He must have a crime committed! Without confiding anything to me, he saddles me with the command of his army, and it was only when I found my tongue, when I looked about me, when I studied my lieutenants and my soldiers that I realised how the former were spies, and the latter the scum of the earth. Yes, Marquis, by the grace of Cæsar, I am a brigand captain. That is the lot and profession of a Constable de Bourbon; do you think that the Seigneur de Bayard's curse has borne fruit?

MARQUIS: Every word of yours wrings my heart. I recognise the truth of what you say. Cæsar, under the pretence of

a generosity that is expected of his rank, aimed only, through you, at damaging the royal house of France; he is lowering and humiliating his rival as much as he can. Yes, my Lord, you have good cause to complain of Heaven. Fate had no right to treat you thus. In leaving your mother-country and your liege lord, you did as I should have done in your place. I know that nowadays this is a principle tending to take root—that a man must undergo everything, injustice, cruelty, insolence; accept everything with bowed head, when these outrages are inflicted by those who have the power to move the wires of the hollow and ridiculous doll which we call Our Country. She is an idol of wood. She moves her arms and legs, opens and closes her mouth, rolls her eyes wide. Any quack who comes along can set her in motion. They speak for her, since of herself she does not exist. Yet for the benefit of these rascals, and in the name of this artificial machine, they have invented I know not how many fine phrases; but these are the precepts of slaves, of helots, of wretches who have lost two thirds of their manhood. A man has a right to receive as much as he gives; if his country and his sovereign claim respect, let them respect themselves; otherwise, we no longer owe them anything. Your sovereign, your country, have struck you in the face, and you have returned the blow; you have acted quite rightly, and have by no means deserved the hateful punishment of falling under the dominion of Cæsar, and of being carried away by this torrent against the walls of Rome, which you are going to overthrow to your own real sorrow.

CONSTABLE: It is time for you to go, noble Marquis. The Emperor treats you with a consideration which he no longer thinks due to me. Your orders are precise; you are to leave the army with your companies and march on Naples this very night.

MARQUIS: My heart bleeds. I would rather stay with you and support your efforts to put some check upon the evil.

CONSTABLE: You cannot, you must not. The Emperor is a generous master to you. Obey him. Good-bye!

MARQUIS: We shall meet again.

CONSTABLE: I do not know. . . . I do not wish it. Good-bye! When you are with the noble Marchioness, assure her of the respects of her humble servant.

MARQUIS: Madam Victoria knows well the greatness of your soul, and I have often seen the tears come to her eyes and flood them at the recital of your woes.

CONSTABLE: Good-bye! To the end of my days I shall remember you, noble Fernando d'Avalos. I shall recall your friendship for a disinherited man . . . your peerless courage in the field, the nobility of your soul, greater still than that of your rank. . . . I shall remember you, Fernando! . . . Embrace me! . . . Good-bye!

THE MARQUIS: Good-bye, my lord, and may Heaven grow weary of overwhelming you with troubles that you do not deserve!

CONSTABLE: No matter! . . . Good-bye. . . . Go! . . . The first streak of dawn must not see you here. Besides, I hear my gaolers, my masters, my officers. . . . They come to impose their will upon me, under pretext of carrying out mine. I would not have a meeting between the purest loyalty and the meanest baseness. . . . Go!

They shake hands; the Marquis goes out.

Enter Captain Georg von Frundsberg, commander of the Lutheran Landsknechts; a zealous partisan of the Reformer, a thorough soldier, a great plunderer; he wears a long white beard, which hangs down on his cuirass; Captain Alessandro Vitelli, and Piero Maria de' Rossi, commander of the Italian light horse; Don Antonio de Leyva, commander of the Tercios; Alarcon and Lannoy, Spanish leaders.

FRUNDSBERG: We are at your orders, my Lord. If it please you, we will hold a council and decide upon the final measures, so that immediately on the break of day, without more ado, the assault may be made.

CONSTABLE: Take these stools, gentlemen, and be seated. I have an idea to lay before you.

ANTONIO DE LEYVA: We are listening.
CONSTABLE: If all of you, captains, or the majority of you, accept my advice, we will yet send a spokesman to the Pope, at this moment.
FRUNDSBERG: With what object? We will all go as spokesmen, and when we are in Clement VII.'s presence, and Clement VII. is in ours, we shall come to an agreement more speedily.
CONSTABLE: I do not believe that the Emperor intends to precipitate matters thus and carry them to an extreme.
LANNOY: Certainly you know better than we do, Monsignor, what you think of Cæsar's intentions; but, as for us, I mean myself and my comrades, we have come so as to get pay for our troops; the men have not been paid these two years past. You promised us the pillage of Milan, then the sack of Florence, and finally that of Bologna. Have you kept your word?
FRUNDSBERG: No, indeed, my lord has not kept his word, and it is time to make an end. The soldier must eat.
LANNOY: Thus it is our business to recapture Rome, and I conclude that it is no longer the time to recoup ourselves with words! Let us march!
CONSTABLE: Monsieur de Lannoy, you are mounting the high horse.
LANNOY: I am frank as a sword; I honour you profoundly, but I shall do what must be done.
FRUNDSBERG: And so shall we. Go on, Lannoy; what you say is well said.
THE OTHER GENERALS: Bravo! Enough of hesitation!
LANNOY: Since I express, as you see, my lord, the opinion of the Council, decide! I am resolved! Yes, let us start soon, at break of day—nay, at once, for the day is breaking! . . . It will see me at the head of my companies! Why, I am there already! Do you hear the drums? Do you hear the trumpets and clarions? To the march, my lord! To the assault! If you do not come with us, if you hesitate to put yourself at our head. . . .

CONSTABLE: I do not refuse . . . but I say. . . .

FRUNDSBERG: I say that you are marching! Forward, my lord! The Council is over. I have conveyed to my men the orders you are going to give us yourself. Let the tent be opened! To horse!

The curtains of the tent are violently parted. The day dawns; soldiers' cries are heard on all sides; the troops begin to move; cavalry, infantry, rush to the walls of Rome. The cannon thunders on the left, and terrible shouts are mingled with the repeated firing. Disorderly bands surround the tent.

SOLDIERS: To the assault! To the assault! The Constable! Where is he? Let him hasten! Forward! forward! Monseigneur! Monseigneur de Bourbon! Come! Death to the Pope! Death to the Cardinals! To the sack! To the sack!

FRUNDSBERG: Well, my lord, what would you? If you tarry, I shall not answer for the consequences.

CONSTABLE: My horse!

SOLDIERS: Here he is! Mount! mount! Come! Long live Bourbon! Death to the Pope! Plunder! plunder!

The Constable, Georg von Frundsberg, all the captains get into the saddle, and the troops surround them and hustle them along.

FRUNDSBERG (sword in hand): Valiant comrades! Look at my saddle bow! See these ropes! They are to bind the Pope and his creatures!

THE SOLDIERS: Yes! yes! Let us take them! Let us hang them! Death! sack! plunder!

AN OFFICER (galloping up): I come from the Porta del Popolo! The entry is forced! The artillery has broken down everything; yet the citizens defend themselves, and we need reinforcements.

FRUNDSBERG: Bravo, my lord! Yours is the glory of entering first!

The generals gallop off, followed by the men-at-arms, the Landsknechts, who utter loud cries and chant a Lutheran psalm.

SOLDIERS: Sing with us, Constable! sing!

FRUNDSBERG: Sing, my lord. These fellows will only run the faster for it!

CONSTABLE: I am no Lutheran!

GERMAN LANDSKNECHT

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FRUNDSBERG: You are our General, and should neglect nothing that can lead to success! Come, let us sing, my lord!

He begins to sing in a voice of thunder, waving his sword, and continues his gallop; the artillery fire is heard all along the lines; the musket fire is mingled with it; the defenders of Rome reply, but feebly.

ON THE RAMPARTS.

Some Italian cross-bowmen and Swiss, both few in number; citizens, poorly armed.

FIRST CITIZEN (after firing his cross-bow): One man down every time!

SECOND CITIZEN: Look! I'll hit that fellow by his side!

Shoots.

THIRD CITIZEN: How few troops we have! Death of Christ! They want to put us to the sword!

There runs up a troop of young men and artists, all armed.

IL ROSSO: Fire on that heretic scum! General firing.

BENVENUTO CELLINI: Zounds! Head and blood of Christ! Room there, room! You shall see a shot from my hand! My cross-bow has never missed. Takes aim and fires.

AN ARTIST: Missed!

CELLINI: You're blind! Look! Now that the smoke is dispersing, just look! I fired into the midst of that crowd of men in plumes and gilded cuirasses. One of them fell; I am certain of it. A horse is flying, with saddle empty.

A CITIZEN: The Swiss are abandoning us, and the cross-bowmen, too. Why? . . . Ho, my lord officer, if you take away the soldiers, what will become of us?

OFFICER: What you please! The gates are battered in. The Pope has withdrawn to the Castle of St. Angelo. I have orders to rally our men, and I advise you to go to your homes.

CELLINI: My word, he's right! There are the Germans at the end of the street. They knock like the deaf! Fly, and devil take the hindmost! It's no time for sitting still.

Leaps down from the wall; the spectators disperse; the last are struck by the halberds of the Landsknechts.

IN THE CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO.

A chamber.—Pope Clement VII., Don Hugo de Moncada, Imperial Ambassador.

THE POPE (in deep agitation): It is a crime against the Deity. The Emperor, this time, in daring to assault our person, is attacking God himself. He will answer for it with his hopes of eternal salvation.

MONCADA: I doubt not, Holy Father, that the Emperor will be sorely grieved when he hears what has been done. It is you who let loose these great disasters, this dreadful catastrophe; the blame does not rest with him.

THE POPE: What, not with him? Do you dare to deny that at this moment, at this very moment, when we hear the cries of my subjects as they are being butchered, when before you there stands the successor of Peter chased to his last lair like a wild beast—do you dare to deny that the perpetrators of these misdeeds are the soldiers of Cæsar? That these terrible assassins march under his banners? Is it not your generals who lead them? What do you mean? Are you going to kill me?

MONCADA: Holy Father, on my knees I implore you to be calm. . . . Be calm. . . . You are in no danger whatever . . . for the present, at any rate.

THE POPE: Do you assert that there is any longer more than a single wall between the violation of my person and those tigers thirsting for my blood? The wall is weak, I know it. . . . My soldiers? You have counted them; their number is small. What will you do with me, Señor de Moncada?

MONCADA: We have entreated you to reject the deceptive and worthless alliance with France. We have implored you not to make common cause with the Venetians, the Swiss, the Florentines, that assemblage of States without honour or power, which is being driven on against the unchanging and unconquerable might of the Emperor by Francis I., our prisoner of yesterday, a man of no faith. You have not listened to us. You support the rebels. And, when our sole

object is to save religion, to restore peace and to pacify Italy, you, Holy Father, you bolster up disorder and maintain the standard of crime in accordance with the misguided policy of your predecessors! Surely experience should have taught you the dangers of such a course.

THE POPE: No! no! no! I have done what any ruler in my place would have attempted. I have desired to preserve the dignity of the Holy See, the liberty of the Christian State. Your Imperial eagle digs its sharp talons into the flanks of a panic-stricken Europe; it tries to devour all, to swallow all! . . . If Cæsar attained his professed aims, no freedom would remain in this world. Have we not seen him encroach with his will even on the pontifical chair, when he set up that phantom Pope, our predecessor, his former tutor, a man of straw, who, fortunately, did not long make a laughing-stock of the first throne in the world?

MONCADA: Cæsar's aims are for the best, and for nothing else; he will do the best! Know, since you seem to have forgotten it, that there exist here below only two lawful powers, charged by God Himself with preserving order: the Pope and the Emperor. The rest is of the devil, or arises only by accident. The Empire and the Papacy are everything, and when one of the two fails in its mission, it falls to the other to unite the two sceptres in one hand and achieve what holy religion demands. Formerly the Suabian Emperors* betrayed their trust; they wished to estrange the nations from the cradle of Jesus Christ; the great Popes, Innocent III. and Gregory VII., justly smote them with the powerful crook; since the beginning of this century, and even before then it is the Popes who, in their turn, have strayed from the path; they are without morals, without will-power, they abandon the faithful, they allow their clergy to browse at will in the pastures of corruption, dissolution, and heresy; they are

* *i.e.*, The Hohenstaufen (1138–1254).—Tr.

themselves pagans! Hence it is Cæsar who will draw the sword and renew the work of the Redeemer!

THE POPE: By flooding the city with filth from the Lutheran sink?

MONCADA: To you, Holy Father, to Leo, your predecessor, we owe the rise and development of that canker in the sides of the Church! Towards the man of Wittenberg you show nothing but complaisance and most disastrous weakness. You allowed the princes of the Empire to become spellbound by that traitor's words, and it is well known that if the matter had rested with you alone, a little money, great God! a paltry sum to which you limited your desires, would have purchased from you a scandalous compromise with the reformers.

THE POPE: You slander the memory of Leo!

MONCADA: He was occupied with nothing but statues, pictures, books, verses, banquets and amusements, and, mark me well! this reputation will cling to him throughout the ages. Accordingly, Cæsar, seeing the Faith dying on a truckle-bed of oblivion, with no one in her hour of need to take compassion on her lips that thirst for pity, Cæsar resolved to stay the disorderly career of the age and lead men's erring consciences back to religion. At the same time, he will bring back under Imperial sway those rebels of all kinds who, since the beginning of the barbarous period, have succeeded, to their own disadvantage, in making themselves free. Cæsar is speaking in the name of God. He is Cæsar, he has the right. It is necessary to save souls for Heaven and uphold the title of the Roman Emperor. Here is no question of the caprices of Italy, which is but one province; of the license of one, of the whims of another; but, I tell you once more, of universal salvation in this world and the next; and you, as Pope, first of all, since you have not wished to go with Cæsar, you will obey him and bow to his will!

POPE: Thus spake those tyrants whose name has become a byword! I am the head of the Church, and the breath of Hell

could not overturn me! I may suffer, my person may vanish, but the Pope never dies.

MONCADA: We revere the Pope! God forbid that my master should ever lay hand on the vicar of Christ! We would not touch his slightest privileges! still less his sanctity. . . . But if I must speak plainly, Holy Father—we whose pure faith is well-known throughout the world; we who are free from the slightest suspicion of heterodoxy—we who are tracking down everywhere, in Spain, Flanders, the Indies, all the vestiges of rebellion against the Church, and that with a rigour such as you have never shown; we who put to death without scruple and without fear, at the public stake, all flesh that revolts against tradition; we, I tell you frankly, shall leave Clement VII. out of the question and shall treat Giulio de' Medici* with an upright and unswerving strictness; we shall pursue him even to the point of deposition, we shall tear the pontifical purple from his shoulders, we shall deport him, we shall imprison him, if we must give up all hope of amending him, of teaching him wisdom!

THE POPE: And while you, you . . . you give yourself out as an ambassador of peace, dispatched to our person, you dare, in my last, hazardous coign of refuge, to use such words to me! You have calculated well the pitch of defeat to which you have reduced me. You gaze at me with a confident smile, in the midst of my oppressed people, the ravished Holy City, with its churches on fire, amid the flames and the cries and the blood and despair! And that is what Cæsar calls serving the Catholic cause!

MONCADA: It is indeed a service to strike down the wolves clad in the desecrated garb of shepherds!

THE POPE: Well, what do you expect of me? Let me go! Let me, nay make me, run the gauntlet of your criminal soldiers! Take all, pillage all, triumph, and let me retire to

* Giulio de' Medici became Pope under the title of Clement VII. The point is that he is to be treated as a Medici, his Papal position being left out of the reckoning.—Tr.

some spot or other where I am allowed to end in peace the days that you grant me!

MONCADA: My orders are peremptory; I could not depart from them in the slightest detail. You will remain here, Holy Father, until you submit to our righteous demands.

THE POPE: Expound them. What is your desire?

MONCADA: The means of ensuring the triumph of reason, of justice, of truth, and of the interests of the Church.

THE POPE: These are but phrases. Formulate your requirements. State expressly what Cæsar commands. That which I should not have agreed to yesterday, that which I should have refused two hours ago, I am now perhaps humbled enough to yield!

MONCADA: We demand your renunciation of the alliance with the French, the Venetians, the Florentines, the Swiss, and all who are evilly disposed. We demand that you become united to us for good and all, as closely as flesh to bone and as the crook be to the sceptre.

THE POPE: Ah, unhappy, thrice unhappy Italy! Thy days would then be over! Thy princes, thy republics would be no more than slaves of the Flemings! Was this disgrace the predestined end of thy glorious efforts for more than a century past? But speak, go on—I am listening.

MONCADA: You will restore to us Ostia, Cività Vecchia, Cività Castellana, Parma, Piacenza, Modena, all that you still hold; Imperial garrisons will incline the inhabitants to learn the will of Cæsar. In the next place four hundred thousand ducats will be paid us as compensation for the troops employed at this moment in Rome, whom I shall cause to be withdrawn. Finally, we shall occupy the castle of St. Angelo.

THE POPE (hiding his head in his hands a moment, then raising it): I refuse.

MONCADA: Then I have nothing further to say to you. I will take my leave. But, previously, I should like to be able to inform Cæsar that you thoroughly understand the state of

affairs and the extent of your responsibility. Deign, Holy Father, to consider the turn events are taking.

He opens a window looking out on the town.

Look at your work! Say if you wish this to go on!

THE POPE: Yes, I will look, I will see your sacrileges—all that you have ordered, arranged, planned and plotted for months past! Yes, I will look! Think not that I am a womanish creature! I can behold at leisure the display of your villainy! I will not falter—I will not weep! Well, I will look. . . . I am looking! There is a man being chased . . . now he is disembowelled by a halberd stroke. . . . Certainly I see! . . . His blood will recoil—on whose head? . . . Ah, my God! women and children harried by your hireling rabble of unbridled fiends! Ah, what villainy! . . . Let me see . . . it is frightful! . . . Monks . . . beaten . . . bloody. . . . Oh, it is not possible—not possible! Cardinals, greybeards clad in purple . . . fettered, struck down, dragged on the pavements, beaten! . . . No . . . no. . . . I can look no more. . . . What a hideous nightmare!

Totters and falls into a chair. Don Hugo de Moncada bows and goes out.

A STREET.

Pikesmen, cross-bowmen, Swiss.

FIRST PIKESMAN: We need a man to carry the booty home. You are not going to put those coffers on your shoulders?

A SWISS: It would have been better to spare the boy. He would have served us as a beast of burden.

FIRST CROSS-BOWMAN: It is always a pleasure to lodge a bullet in someone's head; I don't regret my shot.

SECOND PIKESMAN: Besides, we are avenging our general; since the Romans have killed him, let us kill the Romans! Look—here is a door that is not yet stove in!

THE SWISS: We'll break it down!

The soldiers assail the door with the butts of their cross-bows and halberds. It opens, Il Rosso appears.

SOLDIERS (beating him): What, popinjay, you don't open when you are paid a visit? You deserve a lesson! We'll sack the house!

IL ROSSO: Gentlemen, I have little money—it is yours! But I am a painter, and I beg you not to destroy my drawings and my bric-à-brac.

SECOND CROSS-BOWMAN: You'll see how we rate your bric-à-brac and yourself, too! Strip him naked! It will be fine sport to use him as a mule, and he will feel the stick more thoroughly!

SOLDIERS: Good! Naked as a worm—and kick him well!

IL ROSSO: Gentlemen, I implore you!

THIRD PIKESMAN: You say you are a painter?

IL ROSSO: Yes, I am a painter.

THIRD PIKESMAN: They say it was a painter who killed the Constable. We'll serve you in the same way!

A SWISS: By the devil, no! It is agreed that he shall carry the coffers. We'll kill him afterwards; but let us loot the house at once!

SOLDIERS: Good!

While one part of the mercenaries tears Il Rosso's clothes from his back and beats him, the house is ransacked; the pictures are torn, scraps of drawings fly through the windows, with fragments of furniture and tapestry, then the house is set on fire. An officer passes.

OFFICER: What are you doing to this man?

SOLDIERS: Nothing. He is kind enough to carry for us some chests that we have just bought.

IL ROSSO: Sir, I implore you, rescue me! I am a painter, I am Il Rosso! I have just lost all my works!

OFFICER: Leave the poor fellow alone, give him back his clothes! The Captain, Georg Frundsberg, orders you to return to your banners. You hear the trumpets call to the standard? March! Leave this man, I tell you!

A LANDSKNECHT: And *I* tell *you* that I know nothing of you, do you hear? Are you my captain? No! My lieutenant? No! Who tells me you are not the Pope in disguise?

SOLDIERS: It's true! What tale does that fellow come to tell us?

OFFICER: I have the General's orders. . . .

SOLDIERS: Devil take your Generals, and you, too! Do you hear, sir? Be off, or it'll be the worse for you!

The officer retires.

A PIKESMAN (to Il Rosso): And you, if you complain to anyone, you'll get my dagger full in your chest; you understand, I hope? March, scoundrel!

The soldiers drag along Il Rosso and redouble their blows.

FLORENCE.

A public square.

CELLINI: Well? what's afoot here?

SEVERAL VOICES: We're driving out the Medici again! Long live the liberty of Florence!

CELLINI: Now I have come from Rome, and have seen rare sights!

THE CROWD: Is the Pope set free?

CELLINI: He's caught like a rat in a trap. Nothing is allowed to pass in to him at Fort St. Angelo; and what he and his men have to live on, God in his infinite mercy alone knows. In short, they are dying of hunger, and, all this while, the Imperial troops continue making havoc of everything.

THE CROWD: You have seen this with your own eyes?

CELLINI: I have just come from the spot. I have seen, on the deserted square, crossed with tottering steps by drunken and disbanded soldiers, heaps of dead to the right and heaps of dead to the left; a man dying at the corner of this boundary-stone, a woman doubled up, her arms outspread, on that. What I have seen, is church doors battered in; surplices, stoles, dalmatics, trailing in soiled tatters on the flagstones of the basilicas, or hanging in wretched rags on the spikes of the side chapel railings; candlesticks broken, altar-lamps extinguished, and the altars themselves overthrown, with fragments of glasses, necks of bottles, ham-bones, sordid scraps of the free-lances' feasts; I have even seen statues broken, the most precious canvases torn by the pikes; and as to the outrages, the insults, the blows showered on the most illustrious cardinals, archibishops, dataries, protonotaries, they are too many for me to detail. So common a thing is it that when, in the solitude of the crossways, one of these erstwhile reverend Signors passes, hustled by some jeering scoundrel of an archer—when there re-echoes the blow of a buffet administered to some venerable cheek, people do not even turn their heads to find out more of the matter.

THE CROWD: Shame! shame! We have cursed the

avarice and the pride of the Papal dignitaries, but was it necessary that so much greatness and secular splendour should be trampled on by feet so vile? What says Cæsar to these abominations?

CELLINI: Cæsar, in his far-off Spanish palace, weeps, they say, and laments over the sorrows of the successor to the Apostles; he orders prayers to be offered up for the ending of so heinous a scandal; otherwise, he takes no steps to set a limit to it, and desires to see on his knees even him whose slipper the world reverently kisses. One man alone, amid all this, has upheld the glory of Italy and gained a renown that will never die.

THE CROWD: Of whom do you speak?

CELLINI: It is I, I alone who have avenged Rome beforehand for what she is suffering, for with a shot from my infallible cross-bow I killed the Constable de Bourbon, and you know that, with Michael Angelo, I am the greatest artist of my age. Now that you have learnt what my eyes have seen, inform me in your turn of what is happening here.

THE CROWD: Florence is free, and unless courage and virtue are reduced to mere words without meaning, we shall never go back to the old bondage! Savonarola, the Saint, the great, the sublime Frate, has not lived amongst us in vain! His every word has remained a living thing! All his maxims are being revived, and this time no one shall be allowed to blind us! What Savonarola ordered, we are about to carry out, and henceforth the work will not be undone. We know our enemies thoroughly; a Medici Pope wishes us no good; but what can he do? Cæsar will turn an exasperated face towards us; but if he looks to the East, he will see the Turks threatening his Imperial possessions; nearer home the Venetians are overrunning the Romagna; and if he turns towards the north, he will perceive the French returning, forgetful of their disaster at Pavia and filled with a more burning ardour than they have ever been before. Such are

our friends, such are our avengers, such are our mainstays! The liberty of Florence will live for ever!

CELLINI: My children, rely upon me! To you I dedicate my sword; the whole world knows its worth. Moreover, you are no doubt aware of the eagerness with which Francis I. listens to my advice. Once more I say, rely upon me! Florence is for ever her own mistress; henceforth no prince or tyrant shall set his foot upon her neck.

THE CROWD: Long live Florence!

AT THE CORNER OF THE STREET.

Machiavelli, his hands behind his back, watches the crowd passing and uttering cries of joy.

MACHIAVELLI: What a noise! How they bellow! How they sing! What sparkling eyes! How that word "liberty" intoxicates them! One would say it was the first time in their lives that they uttered it and exulted in this fashion! The bird lives in the air, the fish in the water, and the mob in noise.

A company passes, dragging in the gutter a scutcheon with the Medici arms, tied to a rope. Drums, trumpets; the crowd sings and follows Benvenuto Cellini, who waves a flag.

CELLINI (at the top of his voice): Long live Florence!

ALL: Long live Florence! Death to the Medici!

CELLINI: Signor Machiavelli, you are a great citizen—a friend of Savonarola!

THE CROWD: Long live Savonarola! Long live Machiavelli! Long live Cellini!

CELLINI: Citizens, you are magnificent! Men of Florence, you are a great nation! . . . You are coming with us, Machiavelli? We will carry you shoulder high! You have suffered in the tyrants' prisons!

THE CROWD: Yes! yes! Let's carry him shoulder high! In triumph!

MACHIAVELLI: Friends, I thank you! Indeed, my heart overflows with gratitude! But I am old; I am ill; I no longer

feel fit for anything, and I beg you to leave me in peace! Apart from that, long live Florence! Long live liberty—and the people—and Signor Cellini! . . . (I wonder if I have to cry "long life" to anything else?)

CELLINI: Come, my children, let us set to our work with courage, with unflagging energy! Set fire to the tennis-court where the despots took their exercise!

THE CROWD: Yes, let us burn the tennis-court!

MACHIAVELLI: An excellent notion! Go and burn the tennis-court! Without that, liberty could never be established.

Cellini waves his flag and the whole crowd moves off, with the same shouts, cries, drumming and trumpeting, and still dragging the scutcheon at a rope's end.

MACHIAVELLI: It is far wiser to contemplate men as a passive spectator than to mingle in their affairs. I am not in the least surprised at the strong taste that many have for conspiracies, seditions and revolts. Of all games of chance, this is incontestably the one that sets the greatest number of faculties in motion. Every moment an unforeseen event! Men breathe a boundless hope of indefinable things; they talk, they shout, they bustle, they think of nothing, and they drink, drink, drink without ceasing in a cup of emotions whose savour is constantly changing! Look at Benvenuto, that notable babbler, that braggart without peer! He has not a single virtue; but he is full of wit; he is enjoying himself now like a god; he does not believe a word of what he is bawling, and cares as much for the liberty of Florence as for that of Abyssinia; but he is enjoying himself, and that is the chief thing.

Enter Michael Angelo.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You here, Messer Niccolò? I am glad indeed to see you; for years past I have not had this pleasure; you look pale and worn.

MACHIAVELLI: Old comrade, I am like a shattered musical instrument. I have been trodden upon too often. Some of the strings still give out notes; the greater part are

broken; the rest is out of tune. I reflect with pleasure upon the chance of my soon leaving this mortal covering that fits me so badly.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I understand your weariness. But let us not speak of such matters; we should agree too well. What is to become of Italy? Whither is she going? I left Rome so as not to fall into the hands of the Imperial vandals; I come to Florence, and I find everything upside down, and another of these countless revolutions. The French, who cannot defend the Pope or do anything useful for themselves or for us, have just put Pavia to fire and sword; everywhere there is butchering, butchering. . . . I know that in our young days they butchered in the same way. . . .

MACHIAVELLI: With a great difference: then life emerged from death, whereas now what emerges from death is another death. Do you understand?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Yes . . . almost.

MACHIAVELLI: Well, in the days when we were young, you and I, the looting, the massacring, the outrages of every kind by no means prevented Italy, likewise young herself, from growing and acquiring fresh charms with fresh strength. It is no longer the same. Do you observe that Italy's history was then made by Italians? Now it is the French and the Imperials who direct, sow, till and reap. In former times, we summoned the barbarians to our aid; mistakenly, without a doubt! but we looked upon them as auxiliaries of whom one day or other, after the overthrow and destruction of our fellow-countryman the enemy, we were sure to be rid. Thus it was that the Sforza, the Pope, the Venetians, called in Kings Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Ferdinand of Aragon in turn. The Duke of Valentinois had no other thought. Adversaries of the most opposite views and ambitions were in agreement on this point, and this is all to their credit. Now, the Pope, the Milanese, the Florentines, the men of Naples are mere puppets, of which Francis I. and Charles V. pull the strings,

and our valour is nothing but an appendage to the valour of these two great sovereigns.

MICHAEL ANGELO: We have become provincials, conquered or soon to be conquered.

MACHIAVELLI: Worse than that. We are dotards, exhausted by the unmeasured fury of every passion; rich, to be plundered; clever, to be made to work; famous, to be robbed of our glory; learned, to have our knowledge sucked out and transmitted elsewhere. We are lost souls, and we wallow in something lower than disgrace.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Do you remember what you said to me and Francesco Granacci one day in the Sistine Chapel?

MACHIAVELLI: I was then arguing from probabilities, and thought the Holy See destined to concentrate all the inheritances in its hands. I did not guess what sort of a man Charles V. was, or even Francis I.; the former is the real Pope! He desires neither reform, nor improvement, nor change. He thinks to keep up the old system, with its outworn merits, its present decrepitude; and, by trampling underfoot the incapable Pontiff and the powerless Roman Curia, he has resolved to ensure the triumph of this weakness and abasement. But, believe me, Michael Angelo, believe me; we shall doubtless perish beneath his blows, for he has a strong arm; but he will perish even as we; he will stifle neither heresy nor the spirit of revolt, nor their consequences; not the mightiest will could stem the torrents on the downward course that they have already begun.

MICHAEL ANGELO: But, look you, as regards Florence, the state of affairs does not justify your words. Once more the Medici have been dismissed, and the city reverts to its ancient republican faith. The memory of Fra Girolamo is being re-lit like the holy lamp that burns before the tabernacles. The reformer's teachings are being invoked; his words are recalled, his precepts are re-established, and to-day the Pope will not come, like Alexander of old, to deal death to our tenets. He has far too much on his own hands! How

is he to rescue himself? Could we not come to an understanding with the Emperor, and look to him for the support, so free of risk to himself, of that past which we are causing to live anew?

MACHIAVELLI: The past never lives anew. The Pope is, indeed, hard pressed by Cæsar; Cæsar holds him captive, starves him, scourges him soundly . . . but do you not see why? Because they both serve the same cause, and Cæsar finds his companion inefficient and idle. When he has bent him to his will, he will wish nothing but good to this poor Pontiff; the poor Pontiff's cause is exactly his own! He would rather see in his place the Adrian VI. whom he caused to be elected, an ignorant priest, a fanatic like himself, hungry for despotism in all its forms; but he no longer has him, and, willy-nilly, he must put up with the Medici. That is why he will one day restore here the kinsmen of Clement VII., and, to prevent their falling again, he will invest them with an authority that Lorenzo the Magnificent never enjoyed; and then, poor, evil, wicked, ignorant, corrupt, worthless fools that you are, wretched puppets of liberty, you will become the subjects of a lackey prince, and, by that same token, the most humiliated of men.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You speak harshly, Messer Niccolò; you are yourself one of the people whom you despise so thoroughly.

MACHIAVELLI: I shall not be one. Death is at my heels. Death will take me to where there is no further cause to blush. May I never meet a Florentine in the next world! Listen to them shouting, those wretches, so rich in voice and so poor in brain. See them go past! . . . Their blood courses hotly through their veins, but not one of them has ever entertained a serious idea, has ever sincerely believed in what he was doing. They care for nothing but emotion and idle talk.

MICHAEL ANGELO: That is not well spoken, Niccolò. You are ill in body and mind, that excuses you; but I am sure that for all that you love your country, this Florence, so un-

happy through the fault of her children, yet none the less a great and noble city, crowned with glory, mother of many a hero, mother of deathless artists, she whom her woes to come, if you read the future rightly, should endear to you all the more.

MACHIAVELLI: I hate these periods, well-turned but void of truth. If it is true that Florence has seen heroes issue from the womb, she is a stepmother; she has done all she could to crush them; when she could not, so soon as their worth has been made patent to her eyes, she has harassed them, despoiled them, banished them. . . . Remember Dante and many another. . . . And I, I will tell her, this shameless wanton: "Florence, be accursed in the name of the heroes who have issued from thy womb, whom thou hast devoured like a wild beast!" I am to love Florence? I hate her! And you should do likewise, for more than once she has forced you to fly from her walls! If you had had only her to take care of you, she would have strangled you with your own genius!

MICHAEL ANGELO: Nevertheless I love her and will serve her.

MACHIAVELLI: You will gain no more than she does; but it is also possible that you would not lose much! You are Michael Angelo! You love Florence, it is a costly affection; Florence is not necessary to you. Your place is in Rome, and if Rome continues to fail you, in Venice, in Milan, in Paris. Cæsar, for the honour of his States, would open out to you a broad and triumphal path. I tell you, you are Michael Angelo. Amuse yourself here so long as your heart bids you; you will squander your time, and you would do better to busy yourself with your masterpieces; but they will say: "How he loved his country!" It will make a brave show in the pages of your biography! For myself, I am no artist, whose true country is the whole world; I am not a scholar who can find honour and livelihood anywhere; I am a wretched official of the most wretched of States, and I loathe that State, I loathe Florence.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You have been very unhappy, and you have not been treated according to your deserts.
MACHIAVELLI: I have a wife and children; I am of the oldest blood in Tuscany, as you well know. My ancestry goes far back. . . . There is no bread in my house.
MICHAEL ANGELO: True . . . true . . . it is a scandal!
MACHIAVELLI: I have learnt much; my youth was buried in books; I drank in, so to speak, the wisdom of antiquity with my mother's milk, so eager was I to learn. . . . What have I become? . . . A poor secretary, and nothing more.
MICHAEL ANGELO: You have been most hardly used, Master Niccolò, and I realise the bitterness of your heart.
MACHIAVELLI: No, you do not realise it. So long as I was kept in the lowest grades, and saw the goal of my most justifiable hopes recede further and further, I felt my shoulder rubbed at every moment; I was thrown aside. . . . The first scoundrel who came along, a low fellow, a pack-ass, a man of no talent, no conscience, no birth, was pushed in front of me. All the same, I was overwhelmed with compliments; the missions I fulfilled were now difficult, now dangerous; I fulfilled them well, to no one's amazement; but the stream of flunkeys went on passing, and other flunkeys said to me, "Stay where you are!" I have stayed there all my life, and I believe that the humiliation, the discouragement, the disgust, the indignation that have gripped every corner of my heart have affected me even more than my poverty.
MICHAEL ANGELO: Alas, alas, life is sombre and evil; and when I remember that I too have had to undergo stupidity and impudent ignorance, I understand what you feel.
MACHIAVELLI: No, you do not understand. When Fra Girolamo Savonarola came to preach his doctrines, I was a young man; I loved my fellow-creatures; I loved my country; I loved Italy; I believed in the possibility of reason and virtue. I exhausted all my strength so as to build them a house. What has been the result of my hopes? Let us not speak of it. As, however, I had still a little of credulity

left, I fancied that an able man like the Duke of Valentinois could create a noble kingdom, endow it with wise laws and good ordinances, send the foreigners back to their homes —in short, that there was still something to be desired. The Duke of Valentinois failed. To-day, it is the fashion to regard him as the most frightful of monsters, although, so far as individual or general cruelties are concerned, he never dreamed of a tithe of the useless brutalities carried out by Charles V., among others the sack of Rome and the re-establishment of the Inquisition. But the minds of men are so constituted that they need a number of scapegoats to bear the burden of the crimes of a period; naturally, they do not choose the wolves, who are doing most harm. They take those who can defend themselves least, those whom the dogs have already rent or throttled, because, above all, they are cowards themselves.

MICHAEL ANGELO: You are too bitter; it is true that your heart is full of tears.

MACHIAVELLI: I have no more tears to shed. On the contrary, I am delighted to see how this world of scoundrels, of madmen, of fools, of egoists, who have kept me in the rank of a starveling subaltern, has done so well for itself that the most ignoble bondage will soon be no more on its body than the rag that covers the most hopeless poverty! Glory be to God, I say! they are more to be pitied than I. I am dying, and the Italian world will live, but utterly discredited. You are all great men, I mean you and your friends; but when you have disappeared, as you soon will, there will remain only your imitators, who will imitate you badly; and then will come the apes, who will transform your heavenward flights into ludicrous gambols; then it will be all over with your work. . . . Let us go back home.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Yes, let us go indoors. I will give you my arm and take you back to your house. Among the great men of whom you speak, you have your place, Niccolò.

MACHIAVELLI: Not so! I am only a huckster of ideas, and events prove that I have been but a dreamer. There is a

great distance between seeing and creating the truth. From ugliness itself you make immortal beauty, as it is granted you to mould enchanting forms from the vilest clay; your world may perish, you remain a god and you live. But I? I have understood what they should try to produce; I have shown what is desirable. Have they carried out my plans? No! What is left of me? A poor devil bent double, who is going to vanish, and there's an end of it! So much the better! Let us go back home.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Yes. For my part, I confess to you that, with or without hope, I will serve my country; I will use all my knowledge to defend it, and if it must succumb, I shall at least have fulfilled a duty, or what seems to me one.

MACHIAVELLI: Do not shrink even from giving your blood; what you will achieve on this occasion, as on others, will be amply repaid you by posterity. Posterity will say: "That great artist, Michael Angelo, had no need of Florence, and yet he sacrificed this and that for her!" . . . Come! your crowns are ready; but I, if I were a fool and wished to concern myself with what is being done, I should be used to brush the clothes of the high and mighty personages whom every revolution draws up from its slime, and in the day of defeat they would say to me: "Old fool, how was it that you did not know your associates better?" They would be right. Good-bye, Michael Angelo, I hope never to see you again in this world.

MICHAEL ANGELO (pressing his hand): Good-bye!

Machiavelli enters his house and shuts the door.

Poor Niccolò sees only too clearly. It matters little; I have not my wings tied, it is true; I can go where I please. Fortune, with all her other cruelties towards me, has at least not subjected me to any man's will. I will defend Florence, and if Florence is wrong, I shall yet have satisfied an instinct of my heart.

PARMA.

The Franciscan convent.—The cupola of the church ; the father superior ; monks, churchwarden of the Cathedral ; Correggio.

FATHER SUPERIOR : I have something to say to you, Allegri. You will not be angry, I hope ; I only mean to speak to you like a father, and with the best intentions.

CORREGGIO : Be assured of my respect, reverend Father ; I know that I am open to be blamed on many points.

THE CHURCHWARDEN : I will speak to him, all the more because my knowledge of painting is profound, and I can hardly be imposed upon so far as that goes.

FATHER SUPERIOR : You are a man of judgment, of sound judgment.

CHURCHWARDEN : Yes, especially in painting ; so I will tell you, Messer . . . What is your name?

CORREGGIO : Antonio Allegri ; and as I am a native of the village of Correggio, some miles from here, and live there, I am generally given the name of my place of residence.

CHURCHWARDEN : You must know then, Messer Correggio, that you are no painter. I need no further proof than that medley of colours with which you have thought fit to adorn the church cupola.

CORREGGIO : I would draw your attention, Messer . . . .

CHURCHWARDEN : I am a judge of painting, and you may give up all hope of hoodwinking me! In your painting there are arms too short, legs too long, and noses of which the less said the better. As to the colour. . . .

PRIOR : Listen attentively, Allegri ; you have to deal with a man well-versed in his subject.

CORREGGIO : I am listening attentively, reverend Father.

CHURCHWARDEN : As to the colour, one would say that you have intended to serve us up a dish of frogs.

The monks burst out laughing ; Correggio reddens.

PRIOR : I hope, in any case, that his feelings of piety would not have allowed him to entertain such an idea.

CORREGGIO: Allow me to withdraw.

CHURCHWARDEN: Are you displeased at my frankness?

CORREGGIO: Since, according to you, Messer, I am no painter, it is better for me not to go on with my work, and accordingly I give it up.

PRIOR: You are not going on with your work?

CORREGGIO: No, reverend Father; you can give it to whom you please.

PRIOR: An unheard-of proceeding!

CHURCHWARDEN: Do you know that you could be compelled by a court of law to withdraw your unseemly threats?

CORREGGIO: You may tell the law what you please, but it has no power to put the brush between my fingers.

THE PRIOR and THE MONKS (all together): Then you will not be paid!

CORREGGIO: God is my witness that I need money, for my house is quite bare; never mind! I would rather lose everything and take my leave. I will only remind you that you owe me the price of my Christ in the garden of the Mount of Olives.

CHURCHWARDEN: My opinion, reverend Father, is that you should at once satisfy this grasping man, whose love of gain shows that he is no artist.

PRIOR: Messer Allegri, this scene affects me in the highest degree. I should never, never have supposed you so proud and so wanting in honour. We will give you four crowns for your picture, to avoid further discussion.

CHURCHWARDEN: It is an ample remuneration.

CORREGGIO: Give me the four crowns and let me go.

PRIOR: Brother Honorio, take him with you, and pay him the sum he demands—in copper coins, of course. I am pained, my son, deeply pained, and, to say truth, my soul is utterly lacerated by your course of action.

CORREGGIO: Fathers and you, Messer, I salute you, and am sorry that my painting does not satisfy you.

Exit with Brother Honorio.

THE CHURCHWARDEN: You must not be astonished at this scandal, reverend Fathers. These men of talent are violent, ill-tempered, mad fellows, most disagreeable to have to deal with. Under the pretext that they are superior to others, they ride the high horse; it is unbearable! And if one only lets them hear unpalatable truths, you see what results.

PRIOR: Indeed, I have always thought that the most ordinary men were in many ways preferable to. . . .

CHURCHWARDEN: Extraordinary men. . . . I think so, too. In every respect the artists are far too much favoured. We shall have no trouble in finding some worthy lad, modest and respectable, to finish the church paintings—one who can be treated with less ceremony. I take the task upon myself, and promise that your cupola will be only the more admirable for being carried out according to my ideas; for although I do not paint, it is true, I am a perfect judge of this sort of wares.

BOLOGNA.

A street.—Citizens and artisans, gloomy and whispering, gathered in front of a house.—Two travellers on horseback pass.

FIRST TRAVELLER: What means this crowd? Why these troubled looks? What's afoot?

SECOND TRAVELLER: An accident, I expect. Gentlemen, let us pass, if you please.

FIRST TRAVELLER: There is a woman in tears. Let us ask the cause.

SECOND TRAVELLER: My curiosity is aroused as much as yours. That master joiner looks an honest man. Speak to him!

FIRST TRAVELLER (stopping his horse and leaning over his neck): Pardon, Messer!

JOINER (in the midst of a group): What is your pleasure, Messer?

FIRST TRAVELLER: Could you inform us, if the question is permitted, of the cause of this gathering, and why so many are mourning?

JOINER: You know, no doubt, the name of Properzia de' Rossi?

FIRST TRAVELLER: Do you mean that admirable young girl who has executed so many fine statues, among others the two marble angels that are the glory of the Cathedral of San Petronio?

JOINER: The very same! Her renown fills all Italy. Properzia is dying.

SECOND TRAVELLER: My God, what are you saying! So young!

FIRST TRAVELLER: We are Lombards, and we realise the just grief of the Bolognese.

SECOND TRAVELLER: My God! of what is a woman so beautiful, so accomplished, going to die? She who is so brilliant, so admired, so happy!

A WOMAN (striking her forehead violently with both hands): So happy! So happy! It is just because she is not happy that she is going to die! The man whom she loved is deserting her.

IN PROPERZIA'S HOUSE.

A vast room.—The curtains lowered in front of the windows. It is dark.—Properzia is lying on a bed half veiled by the darkness that fills the apartment; she is very pale; her black hair floods the pillow; her arms are outside the bed and stretched on the coverlets; the draperies, of white and green damask, are turned and knotted about the columns. On a table, phials of drugs, a ewer of silver, a gilded basin, linen wet with blood.—Properzia's father, mother, and husband. A physician.

HUSBAND: Speak to me, dearest! . . . You are in pain?

FATHER: What! You will not say a word? . . . Look, look at your unhappy mother. . . . She is here, do you see? The sorrow will kill her. . . . You know that well, do you not?

HUSBAND (to physician): Come . . . to this window-seat. . . . I have something to say to you. . . . Come here . . . let us speak low . . . Let no one hear us. . . . Confess to me the real truth. I am a man . . . I can hear all. . . . You know that I am courageous . . . yes, very courageous!

Sobs.

PHYSICIAN: Come, come, be calm, Messer Luigi, my friend!

HUSBAND: Yes, your friend! . . . Indeed, I have need of friends! Speak to me as you should. . . . How many, yes, how many days will it be before I see her recovered; yes, her, there. . . . Properzia . . . my Properzia! You know of whom I speak! . . .

PHYSICIAN: Alas, my poor Messer Luigi. . . . I warned you. . . . I have done all I could. . . . You know that Fra Bento has been advised, and I hear him on the stair, bringing the holy viaticum.

HUSBAND: But you do not mean by that, that . . . ?

PHYSICIAN: Messer Luigi, my poor friend! . . . bid your wife farewell.

The husband returns to the bedside.

PROPERZIA (in a very weak voice): Why don't I die?

FATHER: I cannot hear what you say, dear child. . . . Do you feel better? . . .

PROPERZIA (indifferently): Yes.

HUSBAND (bending over her): I ask but one thing . . . that you will not leave me. . . . Do you hear me?

PROPERZIA: Yes.

HUSBAND: You will let me love you. . . . You need not love me, if you do not wish.

Properzia looks at him, at her parents and the room, and half turns towards the wall.

Enter Fra Bento. He sits at the head of the bed.

FRA BENTO: Properzia, I was present at your birth. I have a most tender love for you. . . . You remember?

PROPERZIA: No.

FRA BENTO (to the others): Withdraw, I beg you; keep to the other end of the room. I must be alone with my penitent.

PHYSICIAN: Be quick, Fra Bento, she is near her end.

FRA BENTO: My daughter, my dear daughter . . . my glorious daughter! You have suffered much. . . . Tell me that you repent . . . all will be pardoned you! Speak now, speak, in the name of your eternal salvation. . . . I implore you! Ah! Holy Virgin! She will not have time . . . her eyes are growing dim!

Properzia moves, and her outstretched hands seem to search for something.

My Properzia, my child, you repent, do you not? . . . you repent?

PROPERZIA: I don't know!

She dies.

VENICE.

Titian's workshop.—Pictures finished or sketched. Titian, old, with long white beard, a cap of black velvet on his head, a robe of red taffeta, a knight's golden chain on his neck ; he is seated in an arm-chair ; by his side, Aretino, whose face is full of fire, lively, intellectual, noble ; great liveliness of gesture.

ARETINO : My friend, I mentioned you in my last letter to Cæsar. A month ago, I praised you loudly in my verses addressed to the Pope (which, by the way, have not received sufficient payment, so that I shall praise you still more loudly in those I am about to send to the King of England, for this always annoys Paul III., just as Clement VII. was always angry whenever I published some panegyric of that heretical monarch). . . . But why does the Roman court haggle with me? . . . In short, you will oblige me by giving me a score of golden crowns.

TITIAN : This is a marvellous trade that you have invented, Messer Aretino. With three leaves of paper on which you fling in your style a few gross flatteries, supported by half-a-dozen falsehoods, addressed to anyone you please, you earn more money than any poet, scholar or doctor has ever been able to scrape together in thirty years of toil and vigil.

ARETINO : Do you know why?

TITIAN : Because men love praise.

ARETINO : And dread insult. I can scratch as well as caress, and, in my flying leaflets that are greedily collected all over Europe, no one cares to see his name smirched in the midst of a crowd of petty slanders whose truth matters little to me. He who pays, is praised ; he who does not pay is roundly torn in pieces, and my readers believe equally whatever I print. But what will you give me for my last letters?

TITIAN : Ten golden crowns.

ARETINO : You will give me twenty, my friend, and without frowning into the bargain. The deuce and all! It seems to me that I am worth a good many fine orders to you, a good many portraits! My charge is not high.

TITIAN : So be it! But you will do me the favour of saying

also, here and there, that all those rascals who paint to-day in Venice are not worth all that fools declare.

ARETINO: I suppose that the names of Veronese, Tintoretto and Bassano are to be mentioned, and garnished with epithets little to their liking?

TITIAN: Assuredly! They are men who issued from my workshop. They have treated me most dishonestly, and I am very vexed to see them sell their productions to the detriment of mine, simply because they have robbed me of certain secrets which I had no intention of communicating to them. Yet it is not these know-nothings who are most in question.

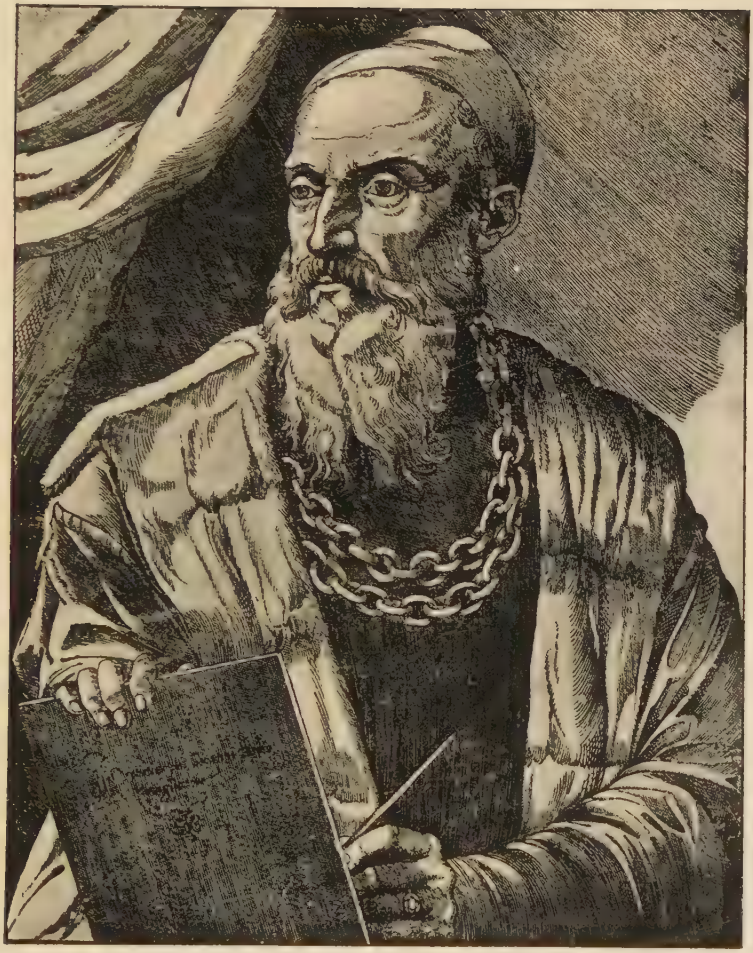
ARETINO: I will not conceal from you my opinion that these know-nothings do some rather fine things; all the same, I will say all the evil of them that you wish, as well as of that other whose name I have yet to learn.

TITIAN: The other is Paris Bordone. I have been positively insulted by that vagabond.

ARETINO: Insulted? How do you mean?

TITIAN: How do I mean? You astound me! Did he not, this good-for-nothing, this beggar, obtain by intrigues the order to paint the chapel of San Nicola of the Minor Brethren? Do you think I will endure such insolence? A miserable workman who is not yet eighteen, is to have a chapel given him, while I, an old man, one who—I venture to say—is at the pinnacle of his art, am here? I wish to paint the chapel, and I don't intend that anyone, at Venice, shall poach on my preserves.

ARETINO: Still, the other artists must have some chances of producing and of earning their bread. I consider you unreasonable, Messer Titian. Paris Bordone is young, it is true, very young; you are the first painter of the world, no one disputes it; but when I observe that, thanks to God, to your talent, and a little to my recommendations and eulogies, you are by far the richest artist in Italy, making and re-making the portraits of every potentate and having a finger in every



TIZIANO VECELLIO (TITIAN)

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enterprise, I find you rather hard in not wishing other painters to try their prowess by the side of yours.

TITIAN: These are mere words. If I did not take care of myself, these shameless intriguers, who come every minute with their bad brushes and try to win themselves a place in the sun, would soon make me forgotten, and then I should die of hunger. Let us leave this subject, it wearies me; know that, so long as I live, I shall not brook, if I can help it, any competitor, any rival. Will you help me, yes or no?

ARETINO: Admit that you are a terrible man, and really without pity. What vexations you caused Giorgione! He died of them! During your life, happily a very long one, you have done many masterpieces, but no fewer bad turns to your adversaries. And who are your adversaries? You have just said—all who hold a brush in Venice.

TITIAN: I will give you two drawings in red chalk; they are there, in that portfolio, and each is worth at least forty crowns of gold. I will give you them, as I say, but you will serve my good pleasure in this matter of Paris Bordone. I wish him to be removed from the chapel of the Minor Brethren.

ARETINO: You will give me these two drawings?

TITIAN: I will—and I consider this a handsome present.

ARETINO: After all, it's of small moment to me whether this Bordone makes his way or not. It is not my business. I shall write against him, and, what is more, I shall speak to the Procurators.

TITIAN: So that is settled. Set to work at once. For my part, I shall address myself to the doge, and if I can have this upstart banished, it will be an excellent piece of work.

ARETINO: What I like in you is that at your age you are as determined, as impetuous as a youngster. You are a difficult man to cross, and I have already thought of writing you a parallel life in the manner of Plutarch.

TITIAN: With whom would you compare me, pray?

ARETINO: With Michael Angelo.

TITIAN: A good idea; it ought to be set down in writing, in verse or prose, and transmitted all over Europe; not only will my fame increase, but I am sure that I shall sell more pictures.

ARETINO: I do not know that my proposal is altogether to your advantage. The older you grow, the more high-handed and acrimonious you become. You are not easy of access, my friend; to tell you the truth is the boldest stroke I can venture on, I of whom everyone, including yourself, walks in dread. Michael Angelo, on the other hand, who a few years ago had the gloomiest of dispositions and the most rebellious of tempers, grows gentler every day, and as he advances in years turns almost to saintliness. Another point strikes me. I know Michael Angelo well, but I also knew Raphael. I knew Il Bramante, Il Sansovino, Andrea del Sarto, and I have heard tell much of the life and actions of the great Lionardo. All these men had, and those of them who are yet alive still have, an imagination enlightened by principles that are truly sublime. They are admirable painters, but also philosophers: they love to reflect upon the most abstract questions, and speak of Beauty like lovers happy enough to have gazed upon her unveiled form in the bosom of the clear azure of the heavens. As for you, I have never seen you in an ecstasy of any sort. You are, indeed, the most admirable painter the world has ever produced, and Michael Angelo does not refuse you a place by his side, save that he ascribes to you certain defects in drawing. But you are a painter who, with the power of possessing all the most excellent things that true and living Nature contains, seem never to have thought of anything above her, and have never let your mind soar to the quest of an ideal.

TITIAN: I have taken good care not to do so. I honour, as I ought, the merit of the great artists whose names you have just mentioned. They have achieved admirable things; they would have done still more if they had not lost a considerable part of their time in idle dreams. A painter should paint, and not hold forth like a

professor in his chair. He should paint torsos, arms, and legs, give the necessary vividness to the faces he portrays, suggest the colour of a bright sunbeam, surround it cunningly with the warm shadows that make it stand out; to arrive at the happiest results, he has no need to know what Ariosto said, but only to represent a model whom he will pay with a few pieces of copper; and he requires a studio with suitable light.

ARETINO: Raphael preferred to find in himself the types of his Madonnas; his mind, subtilised by reflection and replete with marvellous images, lines and reliefs, among which he made his choice, seemed to him the best guide.

TITIAN: *I* prefer to find my Madonnas in the street and make them breathe upon the canvas, to which I transfer their portraits, in all the glory of real life. I make the creatures of God live twice over, for I set them down as they are, with their movements and their reality, in the world of colour and in the light with which the real sun animates them; I portray them as I see them—that is where my triumph lies, in seeing them, in portraying them—there is no better method.

ARETINO: Pardon me. You are slightly in error. I admire you, certainly, Messer Titian, as you deserve to be admired; yet I am not inclined to refuse the artists of Florence and of Rome the respect which is no less rightfully theirs. You know yourself that they accuse you, and Michael Angelo is their spokesman! They accuse you of not having studied enough in your youth before beginning to paint, and hence, they say, the lack of firmness in drawing which mars the work of your genius.

TITIAN: I make light of this ridiculous slander; I draw as well as Nature herself.

ARETINO: That is just what the Masters reproach you with; you draw as well as Nature herself, and no better. Nature indicates completely what must be done to express beauty. She does not always give it herself; she is full of approximations; she abounds in unfinished ideas; her

creations are defective in some point or other; if only because of the touch of vulgarity which she lends to everything, she is not to be copied in what she produces, but only to be heard in what she advises. That is why the painters of Florence and Rome are great; they always keep before them the ideal which Nature suggests, and not the reality which she supplies.

TITIAN: Rest assured that I understand your precepts, Messer Piero. I have examined them myself and considered them in many senses. But do you know that it is a dangerous aspiration to seek to leave the hand of the only guide on whom the artist can rely, in order to hunt in the realms of the imagination for paths where this guide is no longer with you? I admire Raphael, I admire Michael Angelo, but it is easy to go astray in listening to a demand to do as they do. Look at their pupils! These self-styled worshippers of the ideal begin even now to grope in the dark, and their works already show the results of their inexperience. In trying to create better than Nature, above Nature, they give us abortions and distorted beings that lack the breath of life. Remember that this evil will go on increasing; for my part, I consider that it is impossible to be mistaken in doing as I do, and I am not disposed to let myself be led from my track. The greatest portrait painter the world has ever known, is myself! My successors will only have to walk in my footsteps in order to earn praise.

ARETINO: I did not say that you were not worthy of admiration.

TITIAN: You imply that I am inferior. You are wrong. I yield to no man, and it is most justly that Cæsar, and with him all the kings of the earth, all the great lords, cover my canvases with well-earned gold. At bottom, Messer Piero, the real standard of merit for paintings is whether they sell, and at what price. That is more or less the fashion of our time, and it is a good fashion. In my youth, they attended little to this point, and above all your favourite artists claimed to be disinterested. Their pupils and successors are cured of this

PIETRO ARETINO

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madness. They hold fast to the ducats, and work for ducats, as you and I do, and I approve of them.

ARETINO: Ducats are good and beautiful; when assembled in goodly number in a purse, they give forth the sweetest music that can soothe the ear. But it is pleasing to argue about principles. In short, there are more people in the world to appreciate your method than to adopt that of your rivals.

TITIAN: Glory makes a noise only by the number of acclamations.

ARETINO: Michael Angelo would not be of your opinion.

TITIAN: Well, Michael Angelo is a gloomy person who has never known the softnesses of life. . . . Let us leave this matter. . . . Do not fail to keep your word as to chastising the insolence of Paris Bordone and my other enemies.

ARETINO: I will set to work at once. Pass me that sheet of paper; by the few scrawls with which I shall cover it I give success or ruin, fame or disgrace, life or death, just as I please; I do not even need talent; I have nothing to do with truth; all I require is the donkey's ears of human silliness. You see this sheet of paper? It will soon be worth two soldi, printed!

BRUSSELS.

1555.

The Palace.—The Emperor's study; Charles V.; the heir apparent Don Philip, King of England and Naples, standing before his father; the latter seated in an arm-chair of black leather.

CHARLES V.: For what I have to say to you, Infante Don Philip, be seated, and put on your hat.

The heir apparent obeys.

Certain ideas, which I have been revolving for about a year past, have come to maturity, and it is time to communicate them to you. I intend to abdicate the power entrusted to my hands by Heaven, and to transfer my sovereignties to you.

DON PHILIP: Doubtless your Majesty has sufficient reasons for so important a resolve.

CHARLES V.: I am ill, weak; I am weary. When I consider the way in which so many monarchs reign or have reigned, I find the task that has been set me a hard one. Besides, facts speak for themselves. In order to give you some idea of what my life has been, it will suffice to recall to your memory what States are at this moment united under the sway of our house. The Empire, Flanders, Burgundy, and Artois; the kingdoms of Spain, comprising also Naples, the Milanese and Sardinia; by your marriage with Queen Mary I have joined England to this immense territory; my flag flies over the fortresses of Africa, and the vast continent of the New Indies unresistingly obeys my laws. To maintain, consolidate and improve so huge a machine, my life has been nothing but one long voyage. I have gone nine times to Germany, six times to my Spanish dominions, seven times to France, ten times to the Netherlands, twice to England, and twice to Africa; eleven times my navies have taken me across the ocean, an ocean less stormy than the billows of these unending affairs which I have had constantly to supervise. Once more I say, I am weary, and you are to take my place.

DON PHILIP: God forbid that I should hesitate to obey!

I am too well assured of the firmness of Cæsar's will to submit the slightest objection.

CHARLES V.: You are right to be guided by obedience, holy, glorious, all-powerful obedience. Henceforth you will exact obedience from others, and it is only proper and praiseworthy that you should invoke it at this moment. You have clearly perceived the two real pivots upon which the world must turn, and if I can claim any merit with the Eternal Judge when I appear before His throne, it will be that I have facilitated their movements. Henceforward all must be command and submission. There is still a vast amount of work to do in order to ensure the domination of these two principles, and make absolute silence reign around; but I have already gained much. When I took over the reins of power—as history must tell you—all was disorder; and senseless customs, laws, privileges and prerogatives spread their anarchy over Christian lands; the nobles commanded, the citizens disobeyed, the peasants, ay, the very peasants in their villages talked and claimed the right of uttering and upholding their opinions! Italy, less disciplined than all the rest, infatuated with her knowledge and with the beauty of her achievements, shouted, made an uproar, and, attaching the most sonorous names to the most outrageous follies, spoke of truth, justice, and liberty, and even threatened the constitution of Holy Church. Germany, coarser and more stiff-necked than her perverse and brilliant sister, went even faster than she; by the abominable pamphlets of her scholars, she paved the way for the monstrous doctrine of Lutheranism. At this moment, Don Philip, Christendom ought naturally to have looked to the successors of St. Peter for support. But there, unfortunately, the excess of evil was more particularly displayed. The Papacy itself was turning its back upon the Faith; it was coquetting with the most dangerous inventions of the modern spirit. Hence you cannot wonder if Francis I., like Henry VIII., saw spring up in their realms the Calvinistic and Lutheran abominations; they underwent, like Leo X., like Clement VII., the deleterious

influence; they let themselves be bewitched, for a moment at least, by ideas advantageous in semblance, but in reality no less deadly to monarchy than to religion. When they realised the danger, they drew back, but too late; their States were invaded. For my part, I was not led astray for a single hour, and from the first minute that the disease showed itself, I pronounced upon it; I resisted it with the most energetic antidotes. You know how at first, attempting the most immediate remedies, I tried to rescue the Church through herself. I set Adrian in the chair of the Apostles. He died almost in the moment of his enthronement, and the Cardinals, saturated with all the orgies of the voluptuous hell which held Italy in thrall, would make no further trial of a necessary discipline. In my very teeth they threw me Clement VII., who was worse than his cousin. In this grave crisis, I stopped at nothing; I forced the Pope to be a Pope, and to be up and doing; I raised the sword of the Empire against the crook, and smote Clement VII. on the head. I took Rome. I set up a master in Florence. I drove France from the Milanese for good and all; finally, I crushed Italy. Look into this closely, Don Philip, and you will see that, by this last act, I have greatly simplified your task. Silence reigns now over the whole Peninsula. Go on with my work. Remember that to change its character is to jeopardise at once the security of your crowns and the salvation of your soul.

DON PHILIP: I have listened to your Majesty with scrupulous attention. I can answer that, as to the main point, the rigid maintenance of obedience, I shall have little to reproach myself with to the very end of my days. Certainly you entrust me with a task that is simplified by the submission of Italy: but what I appreciate above all are the two leading creations of your reign; the increased power of the Inquisition and the formation of the Jesuit order. Through these instruments, steeled as they are by an unbending spirit of obedience, and destined to be made great use of by me, I shall be able to continue, in your footsteps, to save the Church

without the Church, and to crush political as well as religious heresy. Henceforth, Italy is nothing; Spain is everything. She has no rival but France, and as the combat levied by you against this power becomes daily more furious, it must needs be that either France or Spain succumbs. I shall not have a more easy career of kingship than yours has been.

CHARLES V.: Work will consume your days as it has consumed mine. But you and I are only servants of the Cross and the Sceptre, and, in many respects, monks of an order that has but few members; still, since the aim is unusually high, the discipline must be exceptionally severe. Monks like you and I, whose monastery is a palace, whose cell is a room gorgeous with gold and paintings, whose cassock is now a steel coat of mail, now a velvet mantle—such monks live and will live in the midst of apparent luxuries even as their poor brethren of the convents live on a bed of straw. All that surrounds us is but straw for you and me, and the asceticism of our thoughts reduces the pretended joys of the earth to less than nothing. These joys, these wretched joys, these splendours, these shameful splendours, these elegances, these ignominious elegances, were raised by Italy to a higher plane than any country or epoch had ever seen. I have set my foot upon the neck of Italy; once more, you will do the same to all that resembles or wishes to resemble her. The world lives not so much by bread as by discipline. Never let your subjects forget that truth.

DON PHILIP (with a grim smile): Ill-timed levity is not in my scheme of duty, nor, I think, in my temperament. I beg your Majesty to have confidence in my firm resolve to postpone to the time of immortal life, which we must here try to deserve, any element of light diversion that may exist in my mind.

CHARLES V.: Leave me. I need repose. The Estates of Flanders will assemble to-morrow, and to them I have decided to declare my plans. Go, Don Philip.

Don Philip salutes and retires.

ROME.

1559.

The studio of the Zuccheri.—Taddeo and Federigo Zucchero; Girolamo Siciolante, Orazio Sammacchini, and other young painters. All work with the utmost energy, some scrubbing immense canvases, others painting scenery mounted on frames or finishing pictures of varied sizes.

FEDERIGO: I care nothing for nature or the ideal; if you dally with these matters, you die of hunger. The chief thing is to acquire an individual style; and when once you have gained that style, paint fast and furiously! Then you will earn money and fame.

TADDEO: Take away this head, it is finished! By the way, do you know how far the Barroccio and Durante del Nero have got with the palace frontage ordered from them by Cardinal Farnest?

SAMMACCHINI: It is at any rate well-advanced, if not quite finished. They are working at it like slaves, and in a week they have completed four nude figures twenty-five feet in height.

FEDERIGO: There are artists for you! Fast and furious, that's a potent maxim! How brilliant has become the part which valiant painters, virtuous sculptors and daring architects can play in the world! We are the cynosure of all eyes; men do not trouble, as in former days, about politics or religion; they think of nothing but art! I have heard my father say that, in his time, Italy was always aflame; men fought over the merest trifles; everyone had a thousand interests to discuss. To-day, thanks to the Emperor, thanks to the admirable order which his armies have established, we live in peace, we earn money, and we have nothing left to desire!

TADDEO: Faith, I had many things to desire when I was employed by Giovampiero of Calabria to pound his colours for him, and his wife thrashed me to a jelly while she let me die of hunger.

FEDERIGO: One must have a little inconvenience at the outset, but there is nothing in that to discourage a great artist.

There are nowadays a thousand ways, formerly unknown, of extricating oneself from trouble. Some enter the household of a cardinal or a nobleman as family painters, and are well-clothed, and fed at the pages' table; others go off to France, Germany and Spain, to carry out for the barbarians works for which they are paid fabulous prices; finally, when you have made something of a name for yourself, there is no worthy citizen who does not feel himself compelled to go down on his knees before you so as to secure a masterpiece. Witness our honest postmaster, Mattiuolo, who commissioned you, Taddeo, to paint the frontage of his house in chiaroscuro, and God knows that you got no small sum for the three subjects you portrayed for him from the story of Mercury.

SICIOLANTE: What you say is perfectly true, Master; but take note also of certain annoying customs that were unknown in days gone by.

FEDERIGO: What customs, pray?

SICIOLANTE: Formerly, the foreigners bought our pictures and took us away to decorate their buildings. Now, these savages have learnt to paint, and all over Rome you see Frenchmen, Flemings, and Spaniards, who take trade away from us.

SAMMACCHINI: Yes, they often get a knife-blade in their backs, do these intruders; yet their number grows, and we are beginning to suffer by it, that's true.

TADDEO: The fault rests with the Pope and the nobility. They forget the respect due to the grand style, and ask for novelties. A cardinal will very likely say: "Come to my house, you will see there a unique painting; admirable subject! execution full of fire! It's an ape sitting astride a unicorn and biting into a peach. The author is a newly-arrived Fleming!" Thereupon the fools run to the Fleming, and for six months you see nothing but apes, unicorns and peaches!

Enter the architect Francesco di San Gallo.

SAN GALLO: Good morning, Master Taddeo. Greetings, Federigo.

TADDEO: Good morning, Master. You seem to be in good health, I am glad to see.

FEDERIGO: What is the matter? You are frowning. Are you in a bad temper?

SAN GALLO: One might be, for less. That old Buonarotti makes my life a misery. Because this madman once had genius, people will not see that his wits are gone, and that he commits nothing but follies.

FEDERICO: It is a shame to see him, at his age, still disputing the field with young artists. He ought to be buried, that Michael Angelo!

SAN GALLO: He will find the opportunity of ruining the cupola of St. Peter from top to bottom. In vain do I warn the Pope and the Cardinals, I find no one bold enough to affront this antique reputation in rags.

FEDERIGO: They're afraid of him! He is so overbearing and insolent! And what a narrow, obtuse mind! I tried to explain to him my new method of drawing which is to make art accessible to every intelligence. He affected to laugh at it. The truth is that he is not capable of understanding it in the least.

SICIOLANTE: We ought to be rid of these dotards. They may have been able to do something in their day. But of real greatness, of real delicacy, of the finesse and polish of things, they never had the slightest conception.

SAN GALLO: That is indisputable. This scoundrel of a Buonarotti is a tyrant, I maintain. He is always repeating that he has been working at the cupola of St. Peter for seventeen years past. As if that were a reason!

FEDERIGO: It is a reason why he should be dismissed at the earliest opportunity. Let him give place to the younger men, who are in a hurry to win for themselves a fortune and a reputation! He ought to be forbidden further to touch a brush, a chisel, or a pair of compasses.

Enter Pirro Ligorio, architect.

PIRRO LIGORIO: You are right. Buonarotti has fallen

into his second childhood. We shall end by convincing all the world of that, in spite of Vasari and Salviati and the few old bags of bones who remain to us of his following! I have a proposal to make to you. The Cardinal sends me to fetch Federigo; he wishes to show him some Flemish pictures that he wants to buy.

SICIOLANTE: You hear? What foolishness! Plague take your Cardinal! Are there no Italian artists?

PIRRO LIGORIO: What can you expect! It is the malady of the age. The works in question are four panels by Wilhelm Key, three by Anton Moor, of Utrecht, and one by Martin van Vos, of Antwerp. I will tell you, to console you, that a German nobleman has sent his steward here; I have seen this worthy man; he has an order to procure forty canvases of all sizes for his master. He will pay well. Will you fall in with the scheme!

ALL THE ARTISTS: Bravo, Ligorio! Yes, we'll all fall in!

PIRRO LIGORIO: Go on then, Federigo; I'll settle the business for you all, no later than this evening, with the honest Teuton!

1560.

A chamber in the Colonna palace. Doña Vittoria, Marchioness of Pescara, dressed in black, reading beside a little ebony table, on which a silver lamp is set. Two maids of honour and a duenna with elaborately dressed hair are doing needlework at the back of the room. The fire is lit in the chimney, and the logs sparkle noisily in the midst of the flame.

Enter a gentleman in waiting.

GENTLEMAN: Madam, Signor Michael Angelo is at this moment coming upstairs.

MARCHIONESS: Good: light him the way!

She rises and goes to meet Michael Angelo; the latter appears at the top of the landing, preceded by pages in the livery of Avalos and holding torches.

Good evening, friend. How are you? It is rather cold this evening.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I kiss your Excellency's hands. I feel better than an old man has any right to expect.

MARCHIONESS: You have not come alone, I hope?

MICHAEL ANGELO: No; since you have forbidden me to go at my own sweet will, without an attendant, I do so no longer. Antonio lighted me the way with his lantern up to the door of the palace, and there I found your servants, who treated me like a noble lord.

MARCHIONESS: Come and sit here, by the chimney-piece. In that arm-chair. . . . Don't move, Catarina. . . . I wish to wait on Michael Angelo. . . . Good! Put your feet near the fire.

MICHAEL ANGELO (seated): I let you have your way, Marchioness. . . . A soul like yours is at the summit of greatness, and that summit is virtue.

MARCHIONESS (smiling): What you say would be true if it were a question of being useful to the poor, and, like our Divine Saviour, of washing the dusty feet of a few beggars. But waiting on Michael Angelo? . . . that is not much humiliation.

MICHAEL ANGELO: To hear you, who would not believe anything but the truth? Open your eyes, Marchioness; what

do you see? A being weighted with years, assailed by all the weaknesses of old age, putting forward his withered and trembling fingers, not without difficulty, to the blaze of the fire. . . . What else do you see? Scanty hairs, white hairs, on a forehead that assumes the tint of ivory, the cheeks sunken and falling. . . . You behold a ruin, Marchioness, a human ruin, the most deplorable, the most irreparable of all ruins.

MARCHIONESS: In speaking thus, you make a picture, and you render it as powerful as your thought. This old man, whom you try to humble before my eyes in all the abasement of his weakness, rises, on the contrary, exalts himself by the very fertility of your mind. . . . But no, you are wrong, it is not a picture that I see, it is the reality, and I cannot imagine anything that can vie with it in majesty and charm.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Yes! you see this twofold infirmity —matter in dissolution, and the immortal soul which will soon spurn it and fly away to the bosom of divine infinity.

MARCHIONESS: I seem to see, at my side, in my presence, in the horizon that lies within the range of my vision, one of those stars which Dante makes rise in so small a number up to the ultimate place in his dazzling paradise, one of those stars with living lustre, which, as nearest to the eternal Trinity, borrow their radiance from its light. You are not old, Michael Angelo, you live and will always live; for that most ethereal, most active, most powerful part of human intelligence, a sure and unassailable guide of the universe, will never cease to be.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I shall soon leave the world. The inner sap ferments in me and bursts the worn-out bark of the tree; the germ splits the pod that surrounds it; the seed, arrived at maturity, swells to leave the pulp that is shrivelling. I have lived here below long enough, and I ask my Master to recall His servant.

MARCHIONESS: You are weary of life?

MICHAEL ANGELO: On the contrary, I am greedy of life.

I wish to shake off from the limbs of my true being these fetters of flesh that bind them. I am athirst for complete freedom of spirit. What I can divine, I am eager to seize; what I can comprehend, I yearn to behold. If, in my sojourn here below, I have grasped something and can express a portion of the truths which I feel, what shall I not succeed in accomplishing when once the walls of barren rocks that surround me have fallen for ever into the abyss of the past? No, no! it is not death that I feel coming, but life, life whose shadow alone we can perceive down here, and which I shall soon possess in its entirety!

MARCHIONESS: I think as you do. We are two very different beings, my friend. You are Michael Angelo; I am only a woman, with enough understanding to measure the distance that separates my sympathy from your indomitable energy. You have done much for the world, and while you thought you were moulding the clay of your statues, you were really endowing human thought with new forms and expressions which it had never known. I—what have I done? I loved well him who is no more. . . . I have loved you well—that is all.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Then you have produced as much as I have, quite as much. As long as Don Fernando d'Avalos was with us, showing to Italy, to the soldiers, the scholars, the populace, that proud and noble countenance, all shining with the greatness of his name, with the splendour of his birth, with the lustre of his virtues, with the lightnings of his military genius—as long as Heaven left us Fernando d'Avalos, the incomparable Marquis of Pescara, your noble husband, you loved him; and in his love you were as gloriously happy as it is given to any woman on earth to feel herself, to know herself. Believe me, that was a noble occupation; and the virtues gradually developed in you by the thrills of such a love undoubtedly become the masterpiece of human worth.

MARCHIONESS: I have reflected upon this, and I think that you are mistaken. However lofty a devotion may be,

however pure an affection and unswerving a love, so long as the heart is satisfied, it recoils upon itself, finds joy in itself, and breathes only in a circle and an atmosphere that are narrow and scarcely accessible to any outside influence. I have realised, since I have been a widow, to what an extent happiness dwarfs us. Must I confess it? It is, perhaps, the knowledge of this truth which affords the greatest solace to my grief. I have not loved the less him whom I loved, since I have lost him; but sorrow and solitude have counselled me to efforts which I have found nobler than the facile virtues of which it was so easy for me to clasp the semblances; and the very difficulties which then crossed my path, forcing me to redouble my strength, have perhaps made of me something that a cloudless happiness would never have made.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Whether a man works only upon himself, or applies his activity to inert matter and breathes into it movement and life, the achievement is in both cases the same: he sets up models for his fellow-men. We can say with truth, when we reflect on the similarity of results, that the most virtuous men are those like Polygnotus, Zeuxis, Polycletus, Phidias, these most accomplished artists being as great missionaries as are the philosophers and the saints. If then I, for my part, have succeeded in producing some good in this world, and the world-spirit owes me some new advantages, do not deny me, Marchioness, the glory of comparing myself with you, and permit me to hope that, in the life everlasting, we shall rise on like wings to a perfect equality of rewards.

MARCHIONESS: So be it, Michael Angelo. May I never be parted from a soul which, already, for so many years has made me gaze with a steadier eye upon so many great and solemn truths; it is assuredly the highest favour that I can ask of Heaven. With one particular quality in you I have been for a long time past powerfully and pleasantly impressed. Ought I to tell you of it?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Speak, I beg you.

MARCHIONESS: We often hear it said that old age is peevish and discontented; that, to its eyes, everything is enveloped in a dark cloud, and the sweetest temper grows soured with years. In you the exact opposite has happened. I have known you morose, impatient, irritable. You were so completely possessed by your own thoughts, that the genius of others remained to you a sealed book. I have seen you when you understood none but yourself. . . . As the snows of age have gathered round your intellect, all has changed; it seems as if, in contrast with other men, you have acquired late in the day a fullness, a freshness of life, clearness, precision, and wide range of vision, and a true knowledge of yourself and of others.

MICHAEL ANGELO: Such is indeed the case. Heaven, I will confess, endowed me at birth with an energy out of proportion to my physical powers. I guessed more than I was in a position to see, and I saw further than I had the power to reach. All that was being produced round about me struck me with terror; I feared that my insufficient strength would be dissipated, and I forced myself with rage and gloomy obstinacy to concentrate my gaze upon that holy aim which I was afraid of missing. Nevertheless, I felt both my hope of triumph and my dread of failure redouble, when I perceived that every step, however toilsome, hard and fatiguing it might be, none the less drew me nearer to my goal. I spent my whole life in work and in spurring my activities; I tried to grasp nature in all her convolutions at once, and I scaled her heights by clutching with my hands, my fingers, my feet, my knees, my whole body, at every point where I could gain a hold. I have been sculptor, painter, poet, architect, engineer, anatomist; I have carved colossi in stone and chiselled statuettes in ivory; I have traced out the ramparts of Florence and of Rome, I have set up bastions, built outworks, measured counterscarps, and not far from the building whose wall I covered with the revelation of the Last Judgment, I have succeeded in raising to the clouds the immense cupola of the

Prince of Apostles. In a word, if I have not achieved all that I wished, I have certainly done something. One day I saw myself in a position as high as, nay higher than, I could ever have dreamt or desired. Popes, kings, the Emperor, princes, honoured me. Artists proclaimed me the first among their ranks, and I had nothing left to ask for either from myself, who knew what I could do, nor from the world, which gave me more than I had expected. Then, while I worked, my heart took a rest; all doubt, all fear of losing my way, vanished. I found leisure to contemplate, to appreciate, to approve, to love. Irritation and impatience ceased to drive me before their fitful gusts, and I became, for good or ill, the man that I am to-day—one who needed age in order to be born, and has become young only in his old days.

MARCHIONESS: What I love in you, Michael Angelo, is that, while you have ever before your eyes the wretched course which the genius of our contemporaries is taking, the present decadence arouses in you neither anger nor disgust.

MICHAEL ANGELO: It inspires me with a profound and tender pity. This world that I gaze upon is a companion with whom I have accomplished a long journey, and, in contrast with me, it has grown weary, it has lost its vigour, it stumbles and is nigh to falling by the wayside, whereas, for my part, the hope of the life I am about to enter on exalts and intoxicates me with the most glorious anticipations. In the dawn of the century, when we started together, my companion was blooming with youth, bursting with health, and every prospect made him cast prouder and prouder looks towards the horizon. While I felt doubts, my companion felt none; I must give him his due there; young, impulsive, spoiled by the uncouth and perverse ages from whose hands he was escaping, his first thought was to reject their precepts, and, though he was quite in love with the art whose charms he began to see, it was of virtue and religion that he thought in the first place. I knew Fra Girolamo Savonarola, madam, and never has the look of that august countenance faded from my memory. I

have lived upon his teachings. Whether it be that he asked too much of us, or that poor Italy presumed too much upon her strength and that her imagination outstripped her honesty —Italy left his hands and remained in those of vice. Yet, nevertheless, she knew herself; she was conscious of her superiority to the rest of the world. She despised the other countries and used their resources for her own ends; she was the object of their admiration, and she knew it. She knew herself to be great, and dreamed only of becoming greater. Her artists—you know what they were! Now, all is over. The fire has gone out. Italy exists no more. Those whom we despised are becoming our masters. The artists have perished. I am the last survivor of the holy company; they who are called by the same glorious name that we bore, are now nothing but traffickers, and impudent traffickers to boot. We had indeed to die! We are dying badly, unhappily. What matter? There have been beautiful spirits, glorious spirits in this Italy, she that is henceforward enslaved and prostrate. I do not regret having lived.

MARCHIONESS: Alas! I am less detached than you are. I feel pained at the glorious things we have left or are leaving. It seems as if, after being flooded with light, our tottering steps are going forward into the dark.

MICHAEL ANGELO: We are bequeathing a great legacy, great examples. . . . The earth is richer than it was before our coming. . . . What is to disappear will not disappear altogether. . . . The fields can rest and remain fallow for a while; the seed is in the clods. The fog may spread and the grey and watery sky become covered with mist and rain; but the sun is above. . . . Who knows what will come again?

MARCHIONESS: You seem tired, my friend. Your head is nodding. . . .

MICHAEL ANGELO: Yes, I am weary. . . . I will leave you. . . . I am eighty-nine years old, Marchioness, and any emotion tires me a little; we have talked of very serious matters this evening. Good-bye!

MARCHIONESS: Till to-morrow, is it not?

MICHAEL ANGELO: Yes, till to-morrow. . . . if I am still of this world. . . . If I am not, till we meet again, Madam!

He rises; the Marchioness supports him and presses his hand.

MARCHIONESS: Lean on my arm. . . . I will take you to the foot of the staircase.

MICHAEL ANGELO: I consent to this honour. . . . I accept this kindness. . . . It seems to me that to-day I can expect it. I have one last word to say to you. . . .

MARCHIONESS: What, friend?

MICHAEL ANGELO: You, whom I love so well, I bless you from the depths of my soul. . . . Good-bye.

Kisses the Marchioness' hand and departs.

END OF THE FIFTH AND LAST PART

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